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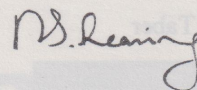
CONTENTS**Features****"That's My Boy"**Medium Level *AD&D* Scenario, by A. Whitt **4****Larry Niven & Stephen Barnes**P.Crank Interviews the Creators of *Dream Park* **11****Shadowrun II - Dreamtime Magic**Part II of a Series on 'Running in Oz, by C.Taber **15****Orcs of Unae**A New Look at an Old Monster, by A. Whitt **20****Sea Elves in Warhammer Fantasy**Detailing a PC race, by C. Taber **23****The Monastery**A setting for *Dark Sun*, by M.Adler **28****Psykers II**WH40K Rules Variants, by C.Taber & M.Thane **33****Isle of Crowns PBM Special Offer** **Liftout****Columns & Departments****Reviews** **2****News** **3****Monster Gallery** **8****Letters** **19****Adventures of the A-Team** **22****Dice Are Dead** **32****Mechwarrior Brewer** **34**

Table-toppers, a dying breed!? With the proliferation of new gaming forms at Australian gaming conventions - Live Role Playing, Free Form and Systemless Games - this provocative statement deserves some exploration.

Some gamers point out that role playing is really all about story telling and acting. If their premises are correct, then surely free forming is the ultimate role playing experience? What need of rules and dice if you can get by with acting and in depth characterisation?

Role playing has never been a game of winners and losers, so why the need for measurement with game mechanics like level advancement, skill percentages and treasure awards? And if we don't need all these things, why are we shelling out so much of our hard earned cash to buy slickly marketed gaming products that give us little more than that?

I don't have definitive answers to any of these questions, but I'd be very interested to hear your views on the matter. I look forward to some lively debate in the *Letters Page*.



Nick Leaning

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Reviews

DRAGON KINGS

Dark Sun sourcebook by TSR

Reviewed by Stefen Brazil



Dragon Kings is TSR's latest offering for its *DARK SUN* game world. After initial skepticism, on further reading it does seem to have a purpose outside of helping TSR to buy what is left of Wisconsin. *Dragon Kings* contains the details for character levels above 20, in doing so puts a cap on level advancement. The 'official' stop point is 30th level something AD&D has needed for years.

Don't get the idea that *Dragon Kings* is a collection of old spells with a few zeros added to all the numbers and a spiffy new name. It is in fact a well wrought explanation of high level powers and their companion drawbacks. These rules serve to define the Sorcerer Kings of Athas, the Dark Sun world. The Kings are actually high level mages who are in the process of slowly transforming into dragons. This process, which is available to players as well, is the only way dragons come into existence in Athas. I must admit that the idea of allowing players to transform into powerful creatures (clerics have their own nasty transforms to aspire to) seems about

as necessary as toddler-sized chainsaws. Nevertheless, by the end of the section on spells it all made a sort of perverted sense. The evil sorcerer-kings are just powerful mages of character races, confirming what DMs have always known, namely that player characters are *the most dangerous* things in the multiverse.

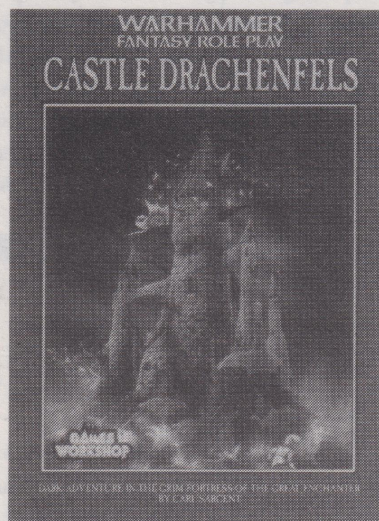
The new rules give players something grand to aspire to. Once they get there, and keep in mind that "there" is 20th level, the processes of acquiring these new forms or powers are fraught with peril and most who attempt them fail.

Overall *Dragon Kings* is a well written and conceived supplement. Information is sequential and not too hard to find, which is just as well because TSR have shown their usual contempt for indexes by not including one. The 4cm coloured band at the top of each page and the large font are also a tad suspicious. Despite this, *Dragon Kings* is a balanced approach to high level play and a useful asset to any DM seeking to utilise the power structures of Athas.

CASTLE DRACHENFELS

An Adventure for Warhammer Fantasy Role Play By Games Workshop

Reviewed by Colin Taber



The *Games Workshop* game novel *Drachenfels* by Jack Yeovil is quite possibly the best RPG based book I have read. It would stand alone as a great piece of fiction even without the *WFP* universe. And now GW have released a supplement based on the novel.

Castle Drachenfels, a 112 page book, is a complete adventure for *WFP* and is worth a look if only for the fact that releases for the game are as scarce as a fair D20. This publication is hefty, well produced and of an overall above standard quality that puts many other published scenarios to shame. Although previous *WFP* supplements like *The Enemy Within* campaign and *Doomstones* have been well written and original, this particular release seems occasionally unoriginal and even predictable. In short the quality of text has slipped. This is perhaps because the writer, Carl Sargent, felt confined to the restrictions that Yeovil's novel put upon the project, or perhaps it is because he was under pressure to finish this, his last work before leaving GW. Aside from this fault the book is more than usable and the adventure certainly tough. Interior art

is very good and representative of the grim Warhammer world though some of the maps are somewhat poor.

The supplement is broken down into eleven sections detailing the surrounding geography, new monsters & magic and the Castle itself - fifty or so pages are devoted to the floor plans and room descriptions of Drachenfels' abode. The book offers no less than seven different adventure outlines, along with a number of secondary plot outlines, profiles for NPCs, creatures and statistics for Drachenfels the Constant himself (gulp!). More trouble and strife than a skaven could chew through in a month of blue Morrslieb's!

Castle Drachenfels holds some beautifully horrific moments inside such as the 'Chamber of the Poison Feast' and really pulses with the bloody atmosphere of the novel. If you are planning on running it I would recommend you read the novel first so as to get a feel for the place. In fact, why not let the players read the novel too, so they know exactly what they are getting themselves into. A good, clever, deadly challenge.

LIVE ROLE-PLAYING

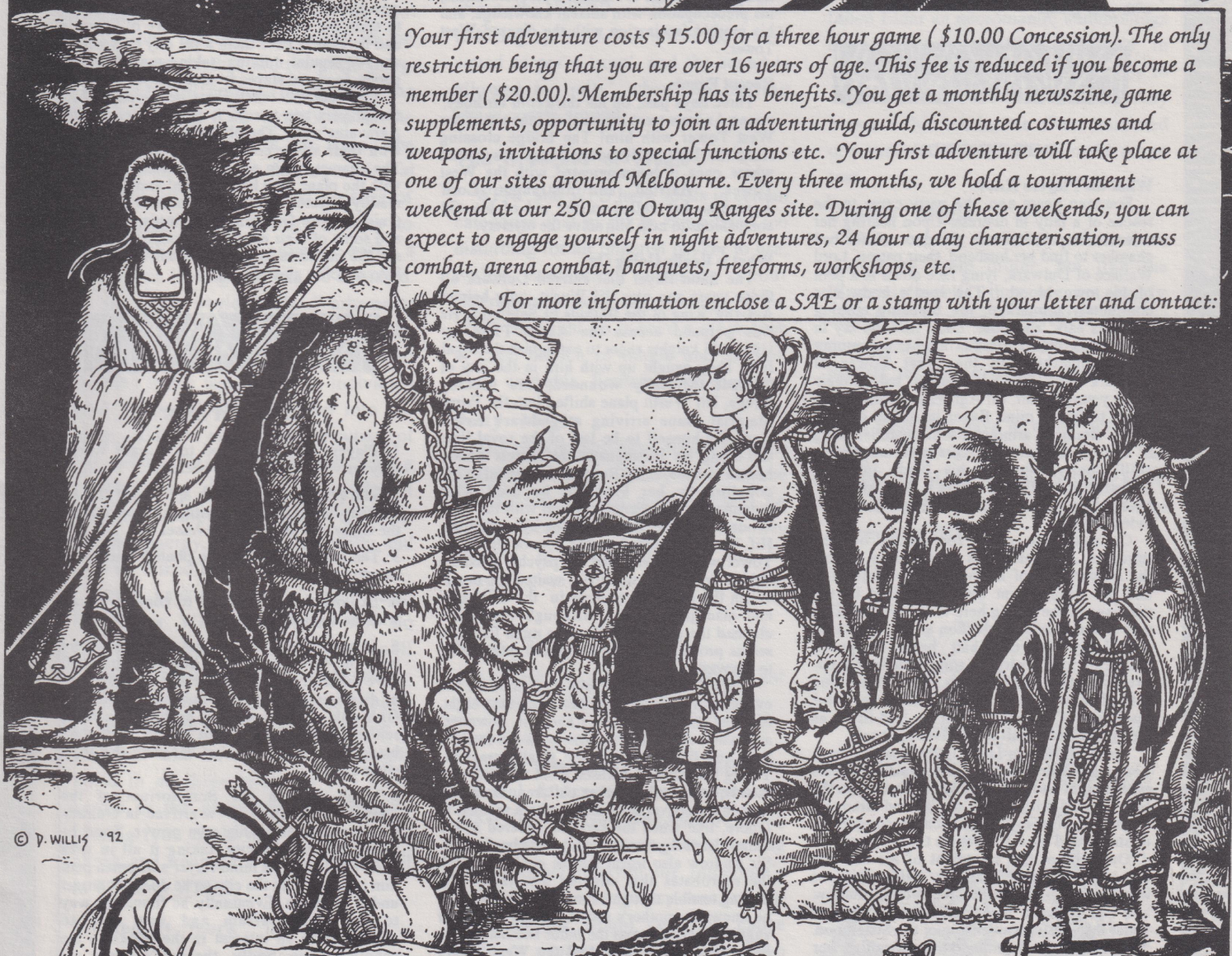
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THAT'S MY BOY

An AD&D Scenario Set in the Astral Plane

by Adam Whitt

Hey You! Are you a DM?

This scenario's setting makes it imperative that players are unawares of what is in store for them. If you are intending to play in this scenario we strongly recommend that you do not read further than *What the Players Know*. If you are the referee, read the entire adventure making notes as you go along, adding and deleting what you think will make it work best with your group.



INTRODUCTION

What the Players Know

Fourteen years ago, the party came to the rescue of a lady in distress. Upon hearing her screams they beat down the door of her bed chamber to find her husband, their patron, Lord Wallace of Dulwark, lying face down in a pool of his own blood. The lord's body was completely unmarked, the bleeding coming from his ears and nose. Lady Rowena lay in her bed, completely distraught, screaming about something in the West Tower of Dulwark Keep. The adventurers, led by their noble young leader, Sir Agravaine, climbed the tower to find a mind flayer in mortal combat with a strangely armoured semi-material being of baroque appearance. Agravaine, not one to shilly-shally, plunged his blade into the embattled mind flayer, killing it. The 'ghostly' beings disappeared and the body of the illithid faded away.

Claiming the glory for seeing off the intruders, Agravaine was rewarded by having the stewardship of Dulwark invested in him, and the arrangement was legitimised by the marriage of the young hero to the widow. This was to everyone's satisfaction as Sir Agravaine and Lady Rowena had been swapping simpering love poetry for some time before the events of that fateful night. Lord Agravaine settled down to a life of marriage and managing of the estates, and the 'old firm', as the party liked to call themselves split up.

Several months later, Lady Rowena bore Lord Agravaine a son. But it seemed the events of that night had unnerved her so that when the babe arrived with lipless mouth and strangely cognizant blue eyes she became completely unhinged and tried to strangle the newborn.

Outraged at this treatment of his son and heir, yet aggrieved at his wife's piteous insanity, Lord Agravaine saved young Andrew and had Rowena locked away in a convent under the careful wardenship of the Sisterhood. To this day she is imprisoned, bewailing her fate and beseeching her warders to kill the abomination she bore.

Over the years the West Tower of Dulwark Keep became neglected as strange things happened in its upper rooms; servants tell of ghosts roaming the corridors in outlandish clothing, and objects move without reason.

Despite the boy's obvious disfigurement, Agravaine has grown to love the lad, even though Andrew shows no signs of following

his father's footsteps in might at arms. Instead the lad is sickly and withdrawn, preferring to pore over the dusty old books in the library rather than play cock o' hoop. Some put the young noble's strangeness down to shyness due to the lack of a mother's love, others, more malicious, wonder at Andrew's precociousness, his preoccupation with ancient knowledge, and his morbid fascination with the disused West Tower.

Recent Events

Three days past, on his thirteenth birthday, young Andrew went missing, and the top of the West Tower with him! The bridge crossing from the Hall of Honours hangs suspended where once it communicated with the West Tower. Baffled, and distraught, Lord Agravaine has called on the aid of his old companions to help him solve the mystery.

What is Really Going On

The mind flayer that entered Dulwark all those years ago was Hif Wurlit, only heir of Arkatha, King of the Illithids of Subtrepia. He was pursued across the Astral Plain by Githyanki knights eager to extinguish the royal line. They caught up with him in the city of Guiradr. Mortally wounded, and seeking refuge, Hif Wurlit plane shifted into the Prime Material Plane arriving at Dulwark Keep. Knowing himself to be last of the royal line, and dying, he impregnated the nearest female human to hand, Lady Rowena. Disturbed in his coupling by her husband, he used what remained of his strength to deal with the lord. Wounded and exhausted from his exertions, Hif Wurlit retreated to the top of the West Tower where he secreted his psychic talisman behind some brickwork and waited for death. When the adventurers burst in the Githyanki had also just arrived, although Agravaine claimed the glory of killing the mind flayer, it seems probable that the Githyanki were going to anyway.

Lady Rowena never told Agravaine all the events that took place in her room that night. She had many nightmares about it, however, and when Andrew was born with his father's eyes and lipless mouth, she finally cracked. Young Sir Andrew realised from an early age that he was unlike other children. He could hear inner conversations that others seemed to ignore, like when the servants sneered at his father, Lord Agravaine, behind his back. And, Sir Andrew also learnt that he could reproach the reprobates that slighted his 'father' by putting terrible thoughts into their minds. Also, he knew his mother's secret, he had heard her anguished cries across the miles and listened to her tortured thoughts. And the West Tower always called to him, Andrew knew his heritage lay elsewhere. Thus he began his researches into the Outer Planes.

On his thirteenth birthday, the call of the West Tower summoned him and he found the psychic talisman of his true progenitor. He grasped the talisman and tried to mentally trace a path back to its land of origin. His unruly psionic talent combined with the power of the talisman caused the entire top of the tower to plane shift to Guiradr. Excited and bewildered he entered the city...

Notes to the Referee

Centuries ago the city of Guiradr was the prosperous capital of a sizable human empire somewhere on the Prime Material Plane. Then, one terrible day, the evil Githyanki, slavers and reavers of the multiverse, decided it would be a good idea to launch a really big slaving raid by taking the entire city captive and transporting it onto a little used pocket plane adjacent to and surrounded by the Astral Plane. They did this to spite the overweening citizenry of Guiradr and because it gave them a pet city they could use for regular milking, taking manufactured goods, food and slaves from the populace.

This scenario takes place in the city when the players trip across it in their search for Agravaine's son. The players arrive near naked with their silver cords trailing behind them. The characters are never completely in phase with the plane they have entered and cannot be readily detected by the native inhabitants of the Guiradr. The Githyanki overlords, however, and some of their especially equipped minions see the intruders as ghostly shadows within a halo of softly gleaming light.



THE PLOT LINE

1. Players are transported to Guiradr where they arrive at the top of an obelisk.
2. The players observe the sprawling city of Guiradr below them and witness the arrival of the Githyanki Spelljammer vessel.
3. The players descend the obelisk and enter the city.
4. Explore the city and try to come to terms with the alien environment.
5. Players should strive to avoid encounters with the servants of the Githyanki, but will have difficulty doing so unless they find a way of disguising themselves. Encounters with the Githyanki themselves will probably be fatal, remembering that each hit with a Githyanki blade has a 5% chance of severing the PC's silver chord.
6. Find boy in the Scriptorium of the Universarium. Sir Andrew arrived in Guiradr dazed and awed at his own power. Soon he wandered into the city, taking it all in with wide-eyed joy. The mind-flayer's talisman puts him in phase with the city so he does not attract undue attention. Eventually he found his way to the Universarium and was able to communicate an interest in the books to the scholars there. Sadly, the boy's hours are numbered because a Githyanki vessel has arrived and there is a 5% per hour cumulative chance that they will become aware of his presence, hunt and capture him. If captured, Andrew will be taken to the Githyanki spelljammer for transportation to a Githyanki home city.
7. Once the players rescue Andrew they must

escape the city by whichever means presents itself eg. Plane Shift, via obelisk, or in the Ramjammer.

8. Possible future conflicts with the Githyanki seeking to slay young Andrew and/or recover the Ramjammer.



THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Lord Agravaire

ST 18/37% IN 12 WD 14 DX 15 CN 17 CH 15 LVL 12 Warrior HP 96 AT 2/1 THAC0 6 DAM d8/d12+6 EQ +3 long sword (Agravaire is a specialist in this weapon), Ring of Human Influence (p148 DMG). Lord Agravaire started out life with lofty ideals. He championed truth, justice and the common good. But his disappointing marriage has shattered his illusions. Now he is world weary, prone to whining and prone to fits of mindless violence. His one positive motivation in life is love of his son. He will do anything to see Andrew home safely, including self-sacrifice.

Sabian

ST 14 IN 16 WD 8 DX 18 CN 12 CH 17 LVL 14 Rogue HP 58 THAC0 14. EQ elven chain, boots of speed. Sabian, a handsome human, is Lord Agravaire's closest friend, who misses the camaraderie of their adventuring days. Sabian never married or settled down. He has always resented Lady Rowena for breaking up the old adventuring team and is very keen to re-establish his relationship with Agravaire. Sadly, neither character is the same person of all those years ago. Sabian's effeminate foibles tend to irk the fighter.

Kin

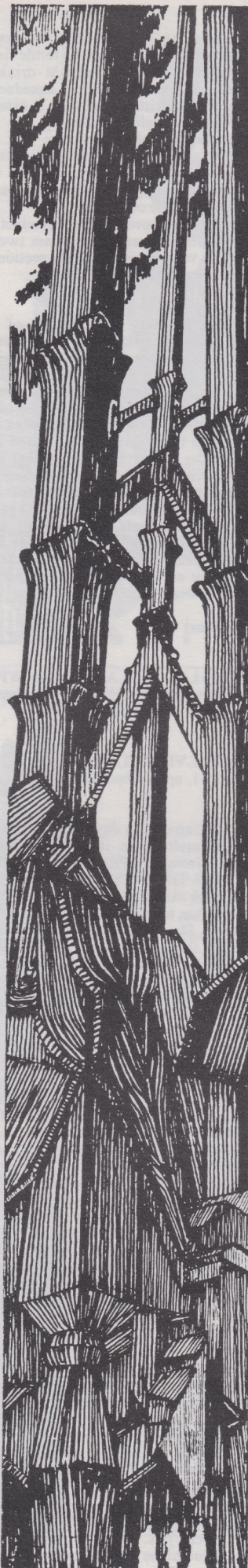
ST 12 IN 15 WD 18 DX 9 CN 16 CH 8 LVL 12 Priest HP 78 THAC0 14. EQ Holy Symbol, Staff of Striking. Has access to all 1st to 4th level spells and the following 5th & 6th level spells - Air Walk, Dispel Evil, Plane Shift, Blade Barrier, Heal, Stone Tell. Kin is a pompous ass with a much inflated opinion of himself as a wise mediator. He has always viewed Agravaire's boy with growing suspicion of his true ancestry. Secretly he has had words with the insane Lady Rowena and knows she is tormented by a hidden knowledge that would, if exposed, cause her spirit to heal. He would like to work a reconciliation between Agravaire and Rowena, but finds it very difficult to communicate with his old mate.

Ita

ST 11 IN 18 WD 13 DX 17 CN 13 CH 12 LVL 12 Wizard HP 42 THAC0 17 EQ Spell components, Cloak of Protection +4. Ita has access to all 1st to 4th level spells and these 5th and 6th level spells - Bigby's Interposing Hand, Cone of Cold, Contact Other Plane, Extension II, Passwall, Wall of Iron, Anti-Magic Shell, Contingency, Mass Suggestion.

Ita is a female human magic user who has lived for several years in partial retirement studying a number of obscure codex's. These books deal with the Outer Planes and their denizens, she has tutored young Andrew in her research. Ita has answered Agravaire's call for help because of an old debt she owes him; she frowns upon Sabian as a simpleton, and Kin as a fool. Haughty and unsympathetic, she will opt out of the adventure at the earliest opportunity ie. if she feels her debt is repaid.

NB: All Armour Class, THAC0 and Damage ratings are figured into the profiles, taking into account the characteristics, equipment and proficiencies of each PC. The pocket plane where the adventure takes place is two steps removed from the Prime Material and so the magical items listed will suffer -2 penalty.



MORE INFO FOR THE DM

Exploring the City

The city is a sizable place, home to some 20,000 citizens. It is centred in a field of giant metallic obelisks, the outer boundary delineated by a crumbling stone wall. This wall, and many of the structures within have suffered through long neglect because they have lost their significance since the city was 'kidnapped' by the githyanki.

The architecture of Guiradr is outlandish and has a strangely disconcerting effect on the adventurers. The works of Escher seem to have inspired Guiradr's builders and the uneasy feelings of the players is compounded by having their eyes play tricks on them. The heavy grey-green sky that blankets the city lends the place a wierd, closeness that tends to distort vision so that depth perception is disoriented.

Consequently, players are likely to become confused and lost as they try to approach doorways and road entrances which are not where they seem to be. To replicate this condition, have the players regularly (once per turn whilst exploring) check versus Wisdom to avoid bumping into buildings, tripping over curbstones, separating from the rest of the party and generally getting lost. Use these effects (and invent your own) to make the players feel frustrated and unnerved, it is important that they do not feel comfortable in this strange environment.

The Citizens of Guiradr

The players are not entirely in tune with Guiradr. They have crossed a boundary between the Prime Material Plane and the Astral Plane and are currently located in neither. The inhabitants of this 'island plane' do not properly see, hear or feel visitors from other planes. Some especially sensitive people of Guiradr are able to sense visitors (5% chance per encounter) but they experience the PCs as 'ghosts' or 'apparitions' and have learned to shut them out of their minds. Consequently, they will ignore most attempts by player characters to contact them.

To simulate these effects have Guiradr citizens look straight through PCs, ignore any words spoken to them, and have the sensitive ones (5% of population) merely shiver and make a sign of warding against evil if a player touches them. If attacked (remembering only magical weapons of +2 or better are able to affect the locals) Guiradr locals will run in terror, gaping at their wounds and calling on their gods to protect them. Generally speaking the citizens are unable to defend themselves, relying on their 'patrons' the Githyanki for protection.

Again, all of these phenomena are designed to disorient, confuse and frustrate the players. Skillful referees will delay letting on to players exactly what is going on as long as possible. An example of this is if a PC approaches a beggar for directions, have the beggar ignore them, then hint that perhaps the beggar is deaf/blind. Keep 'em guessing!

Talking to the Citizens

This can only be achieved magically. In essence, the casting of any *individual affecting* spell makes the recipient 'real' for the city dwellers for the duration of that spell. Suddenly the character will manifest in Guiradr freaking out the locals who may treat the apparition as a ghost- being likely to harm them and they will do anything to avoid contact. In addition, at the discretion of each referee, all *communicative* spells may enable the party to directly communicate with the citizens of Guiradr eg *Command* (Pr 1), *ESP* (Wiz 2), *Clairaudience* and *Suggestion* (Wiz 3) etc. Even when contact is made it will be necessary for the character to cast *Comprehend Languages* as Common Tongue of the players native plane is not spoken here except by rare visitors.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

Read the following to the players.

Having answered Lord Agravaire's plea for help, your party has gathered together to investigate the disappearance of the top section of the West Tower, and young Sir Andrew with it. It is a cold windswept evening with rain lashing the slick grey battlements of Dulwark Keep when the old firm mounts to the high gallery of the of the Hall of Honours. There you pause whilst a Sergeant of the Watch unlocks the heavy door that opens onto the arching bridge which is the only way into the top section of the West Tower.

The bridge is wreathed in a grey green mist that swirls and eddies thickly around the forms of the adventurers as one by one you cross the narrow companionway. From the courtyard below, the sounds of the castle folk going about their end of day duties fades as you each enter the mist and cross to the other side. There you find yourselves on a high platform, naked and with a soft warm rain falling. In the distance you see a strange vessel appear above the city and make towards a ruined aquaduct.



ENCOUNTERS

If you feel the need for one, the referee should devise their own map of the city, and add, delete or change any encounters or areas that they judge will enhance the adventure. The areas presented should give you some ideas of what Guiradr is like. Try to use the areas described to evoke a feeling of disjunction and weirdness in your players.

The Obelisks

(See front cover of magazine for an accurate description of these huge alien monoliths).

The players arrive in the mouthpiece section of one the obelisks, on a high platform facing out over a sprawling metropolis. The obelisks surround the city and extend in a vast sea as far as the eye can see in all directions. They stand beneath the glowering sky like silent sentinels, bleeding rust due to the slow corrosive effects of the incessant acid rain.

The interior of the obelisk is gutted of all furnishings, although wierd heiroglyphic markings adorn the walls (these cannot be deciphered). Huge stone stairways lead down through a series of rooms to the bottom of the obelisk where an exit gapes at ground level.

The obelisks may or may not be native to this pocket of the Astral Plane. They pre-date both Guiradr and the Githyanki. Enterprising referees may make them the artefacts of an ancient race that could provide future adventure links.

Acid Rain

Remembering that the PCs are naked except for their few magic items, the 'acid rain' will corrode 1 hit point per hour of exposure. The players do not feel any pain as such, just explain that their skin feels soapy and softened. All gear must make a saving throw versus acid +2 for each hour exposed.

The rainfall doesn't extend into the city itself as the Githyanki have cunningly arranged a force barrier that excludes it and protects the townsfolk. The citizens are free to leave the city and walk into the obelisk fields, but there is no food there, and eventually the rain will kill.

The Aqueduct

Centuries past, when it existed on the Prime Material Plane, Guiradr drew its water supply from a lake many miles beyond its outer perimeter. The engineers of the city built a huge stone aqueduct (50ft high, 20 ft wide, water 8 ft deep,

each arch spanning 30ft) that stretched from a lake in the 'north' and irrigated the fertile fields surrounding the city and brought drinking water to the city centre. Now the aqueduct is severed at the outskirts of the city. It extends only a few hundred yards into the city.

It is to this obsolete structure that the Githyanki overlords moor their spelljamming vessel when they visit the city. The PCs will observe this happening when they look out of the mouthpiece of the obelisk.

If the players approach the aquaduct or Ramjammer they will encounter team two of the githyanki vessel crew. See the section on the githyanki for further details.

The Judiciary

The local citizenry live in fear of the Githyanki overlords and their puppet governor - Tibrat the Brandisher. Tibrat is a foreigner, transported to Guiradr by the Githyanki. He is an immensely obese and self-indulgent despot, who controls the masses via the agencies of his militia, the feared Gorea. The Gorea are recruited from the populace and coaxed into Tibrat's service by privilege and power over their fellow citizens. As well as tending the slave labour parties, they police the city precincts, rooting out dissension against Tibrat's autocratic rule, quelling all civil disturbances with cruel zeal no matter how trivial the transgression. Tibrat's rule is punctuated by executions, terror campaigns, curfews and unreasonable taxes.

Gorea Profiles

Trooper

AC 5 HP 25 LVL 3 CLASS Warrior WPNS whip, short sword, goad (treat as javelin) EQUIP (1 in 6) Astral Helm.

Overseer

AC 3 HP 40 LVL 5 CLASS Warrior WPNS long sword +1, spiked buckler EQUIP Astral Helm.

Although Guiradr is a city isolated from the rest of the multi-verse it has its visitors, adventurers from the Prime Material Plane mostly. 1 in 6 Troopers and all Overseers are equipped with Astral Helms which have no other effect than to enable the wearer to detect these visitors. Player characters who are 'out of phase' with the city will be noticeable to vigilant Gorea patrols as gleaming beacons of light! It is going to be tricky for the party to avoid contact with these dreaded deputies of the Githyanki regime.

The Mines

The githyanki enslaved Guiradr to work for them, to gather great wealth for their trading expeditions. To accomodate this goal they have cunningly placed the city on a pocket of the Astral Plane that is riddled with minor openings into all the Elemental Planes (Para & Quasi included). The labourers of the city slave under arduous and perilous conditions mining precious minerals from these openings. The down side of the location is that often an elemental creature will break into the city and cause havoc. Roll percentile dice each hour, with a result of 01% indicating an elemental creature has appeared. When this happens, Tibrat calls on the Githyanki to deal with the elemental.

The Warehouse

All the mineral wealth delved out of the elemental planes is stored in vast warehouses guarded by Gorea troops. The warehouses are situated in a district near the ruined aquaduct. One of these houses the raw ore from which Githyanki silver is smelted., the same silver from which their feared swords are crafted!

The Clay Pits

Close to the outskirts of the city are a number of claypits. These are large round, shallow depressions that actually abutt the Para-elemental Plane of Ooze and are worked

by sorry gangs of slaves, native inhabitants of the city who are driven in their drudgery by bully boy overseers armed with whips and insults. These drivers in turn are supervised by members of the Gorea.

The Pottery

The pottery of Gorea is second to none. Not far from the Clay Pits, two steep-gabled buildings adjoin each other at right angles with a sheltered, paved courtyard in the crook of their elbow joint. Along the white-washed inner walls facing the courtyard are wide verandahs where pots of all shapes and sizes are arrayed in tidy rows. Skilled craftsmen sit in the courtyard decorating the clay pots that have been created within the two buildings - each man is hunkered over his latest work, carefully daubing thick paint onto the porous surface of the pots with brushes cut from narrow wood rods. The older men sit to the front with the younger men ranked behind, each learning from the more skilled man seated in front of him.

The larger building houses the brick firing kilns whilst the smaller has two rooms - a display area where customers are browsing over the wares and the work room where the pedal-powered wheels are manned by muddled potters. Out the back is a clay pit and tool storage shed.

The Plaza

All major arterial roads of Gorea lead to this area more or less central to the city. It is a wide area of pale red and grey stone paving slabs kept meticulously clean by street sweepers equipped with switch brooms. The Plaza is not square, in fact Euclidian geometry is at a loss to describe the complex asymmetry of the area surrounded by the colossal main municipal buildings of the city. Members of the Gorea make certain loiterers and hucksters are kept moving along whilst white toga clad officials dart from building to building on obscure bureaucratic missions. The convolutions of the city's politics is as tortuous to Prime Material Plane minds as the local architecture.

Player characters will have difficulty traversing the Plaza without finding themselves approaching the lobbies of one of the buildings - Court House, Councilarium, Penitentiary, Exchequer, etc. - and consequently encountering the wrath of the Gorea. Finding a road ending to escape this disquieting area requires a d20 check versus Wisdom.

The Cisterns

There are several of these located throughout the city. Basically they are magically created portals to the Elemental Plane of Water which brave adventurers could conceivably use as escape routes! They were manufactured by the Githyanki to provide water for the city.

Each cistern contains a brackish water that is drawn from the deep stone well by manual labour equipped with metal buckets. The water is rationed, and each family or business within the city must send someone to their local cistern each day for their dole of drinking water. The water has a tangy metallic taste, but is quite refreshing and has no adverse effects.

Speakers Corner

For his amusement, Tibrat has allowed one corner of the city where dissenters may air their views. Obviously few citizens have the energy or courage to do so. But a recently arrived adventurer priest who has become mad has taken up residence and stands on a stone plinth berating the local citizenry to take up arms and revolt against the Githyanki installed governor.

Even if the locals were willing to listen, the frothing priest (Zedra) is wasting his time because he is mouthing off in Common Tongue! Players can understand him, but will learn little unless they manage to quieten Zedra's madness. Gorea spies watch over Zedra and will note any interaction with the players.

The Retired Players

In this quiet corner of the city, old folk, too infirm for useful labour are cared for. This unexpected kindness is one of many paradoxes for the players to ponder in their exploration of Guiradr.

The old people are allowed to spend their autumn days sitting in small groups in sheltered courtyards poring over moves in an incredibly complex game played on two adjacent boards. The game (which is also played in the city's taverns for high stakes) consists of three sets of coloured knobby stones, two sets move across a board marked with a dual spiral of notched holes whilst the third set is arranged and re-arranged according to the fortunes of the two players on the adjacent honey-comb patterned board.

The Growing Fields

Although some of the ruling classes and members of Tibrat's court are lucky enough to feast on delicacies imported by the Githyanki, the majority of Guiradr's population subsist on fungi, rusts and moulds as cultivated in the growing fields. These are raised beds of humus (of dubious origin!) tended by slave labourers and skilled gardeners. The cultivators have engineered innumerable species so that the city's diet is surprisingly varied and nutritious. Some of the fungi even have healing properties when dried and treated by an apothecary (1d8+1 hp recovered per portion).

The Universarium

Another colossal complex of non-Euclidian shaped buildings. Guiradr was famed for its advances in mathematics, geometry, the humanities and magic before the Githyanki rule. Tibrat understands that knowledge is power and so has closed the Universarium. These days it is a dusty fossil, its buildings unused except by the wardens, blinded slaves who creep the corridors in silence. The Scriptorium is one of the great untapped resources of the multiverse with thousands of manuscripts that have laid unread for centuries. Young Sir Andrew will be found here unless the Githyanki have already found him.

Other Establishments

Space precludes a full exposition of the city. What I suggest you do is take our lead and jot down a few notes that will enable you to run encounters in a number of areas. Otherwise, use this table:

	Roll d10 each turn
1-5	Common Household
6-7	Shop
8-9	Tavern
10	Civic building/Villa

Common Households

Although the layout is crazy to PC eyes, the city is not overly crowded. Each citizen, from common slave to skilled labourer has a home to go to. There are two main types of common abode, single storey dwellings with small courtyard arranged along side zig-zagging roadways, and multi-storey high rises with numerous balconies and wide open spaces at their feet. Here the womenfolk and children pass their days in common domestic activities.

Shop

Beneath the brutal exterior of Githyanki rule, bastardisation by the Gorea and Tibrat's insane decrees (no marriage for left-handed males), amidst the dizzying architecture, there is an oddly peaceful normality about the city. Workshops manufacture, and shops sell ordinary household goods to ordinary householders. There are grocers, bakers, ironmongers, tanners, tailors, chandlers, bootmakers, glass blowers and more. Anything the players could want is purchasable if they have the coin, which they don't.

Tavern

Like all cities, Guiradr has its drinking dens. They are of varying

quality, from cheap booze joints where the poor labourers drink away their sorrows at days end (an artificial time division as the sky never changes from dull grey green), through ribald gambling houses where the slave drivers, the Gorea, and petty officials carouse their ill gotten gains, to genteel establishments where the privileged ruling classes take their pleasures in well appointed salons, bemoaning their loss of empire.

Civic Buildings

As mentioned, Gorea was once centre of a glorious empire. It was administered by a vast and convoluted bureaucracy. Although the empire is no more, the bureaucracy remains and so do the buildings that housed it. All are alarmingly gargantuan, consisting of spectacularly improbable architecture with interiors featuring rooms beyond number each with incomprehensible purpose and each inhabited with a petty official armed with pen, ink and endless forms. Players enter them at their own risk, particularly if they are 'in phase' as they will be doomed to mummification in red tape!

Villas

The privileged ruling classes of Guiradr are descendants of the generals, patricians and merchants of the empire. They are allowed to hold onto what little status remains in a slave city, and live a life of sham elegance amongst the savagery of Tibrat's rule. These well to do folk dwell in fancy villas that ring the outskirts of the city, each surrounded by spacious parklands tended by slaves. The asymmetric architecture of the villas recall the bygone decadence of the Guiradr empire days.

The Githyanki

Refer to either the *Fiend Folio* or *Monstrous Compendium* 8 for full details on the Githyanki. Both descriptions should convince you that the PCs don't want to encounter them!

If, however, the worst happens, here is the basic composition of the Githyanki force. The

Ramjammer (see Monster Gallery for full details) that recently arrived is a typical Githyanki trading vessel, in the city to pick up a cargo of gemstones and silver ore. There are also some documents for Tibrat.

The captain is Yan Kurled, a 7th/8th level fighter/mage who has two teams of marines with him. Team one is led by Wark Skilur, an 8th level fighter and consists of a warlock (6th level), a sergeant (6th level), a gish (4th/4th level fighter/mage) and 8 troopers (3rd level). This team has entered the city to deliver the documents and collect the cargo.

Team two is led by Gret a 7th/6th level fighter/mage and consists of a warlock (5th level), two sergeants (5th level), and 6 troopers (3rd level). These stay at the aquaduct to guard the Ramjammer. A party of one sergeant and 3 troopers will be despatched from this team to collect Sir Andrew if he is detected.

The Githyanki are equipped with baroque armour and silver swords (+2, +3 or +5) appropriate to their station.

Other Encounters

In spite of its locale, Guiradr is a thriving metropolis, its streets, squares and bazaars teeming with townsfolk going about their daily business. Gorea patrol these areas and even the odd tourist has been known to visit the place incognito. To determine random encounters use the following table:

Roll d20 each turn

1-5	Ordinary Citizen
6	Beggar
7-9	Gorea (city guard)
10	Drunk
11-12	Labourer/Pedlar (50/50)
13	Harlot
14-15	Tradesman
16	City Official
17-18	Slave Party
19	Pick Pocket
20	Tourist/Githyanki (50/50)

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MONSTER GALLERY

This issue we give AD&D's githyanki a Spelljammer™

Ramjammer

by Adam Whit

Built By: Githyanki
Used By: Githyanki, Undead
Tonnage: 36 tons
Hull Points: 36
Crew: 4/40*
Manoeuvre: — D —
Landing-Land: Yes
Landing-Water: No
Armour Rating: 5
Save As: Bone
Power Type: Self-motive
 or Lifejammer

Ship's Rating: d6+d3

Standard Armament:

1 Heavy Catapult	Crew: 5
2 Medium Ballistas	Crew: 2 ea
5 Light Ballistas	Crew: 1 ea
2 Rams	

Cargo: 5 tons

Keel Length: 90' (including
horns)

Beam Length: 75'

* Githyanki crew do not require oxygen and so the upper limit given here is not absolute.

Why do the githyanki need spelljammers? Well, even though they can *plane shift* at will, there is a limit to where they can go, the phlogiston between the crystal spheres does not allow direct entry from the Astral, or any other Plane. And besides which, the githyanki cannot physically carry all the booty and trade goods that they acquire. Hence the Ramjammer.

The first thing to note about the Ramjammer is that it is a creature unto itself, the skull of a demised ram of

gargantuan proportions, it is still alive. The githyanki discovered this race of massive sheep in their travels and found when killed and butchered properly, the life essence can be maintained by retaining in the spinal cortex. This they do, and then have one of their own kind *magic jar* into the cortex. The 'lucky' individual provides the motive power (including *plane shift*) for the vessel, the rating set by the githyanki's level (roll d6+d3). The Ramjammer is a multi-purpose vessel used by the githyanki as a war platform, cargo vessel and exploration ship. It, and the sheep it derives from, is extremely rare.

Crew

The Ramjammer's self-motive drive allows it to operate with a minimal crew. It's manoeuvre class is respectable and can be improved with additional rigging and other modifications. The githyanki will only

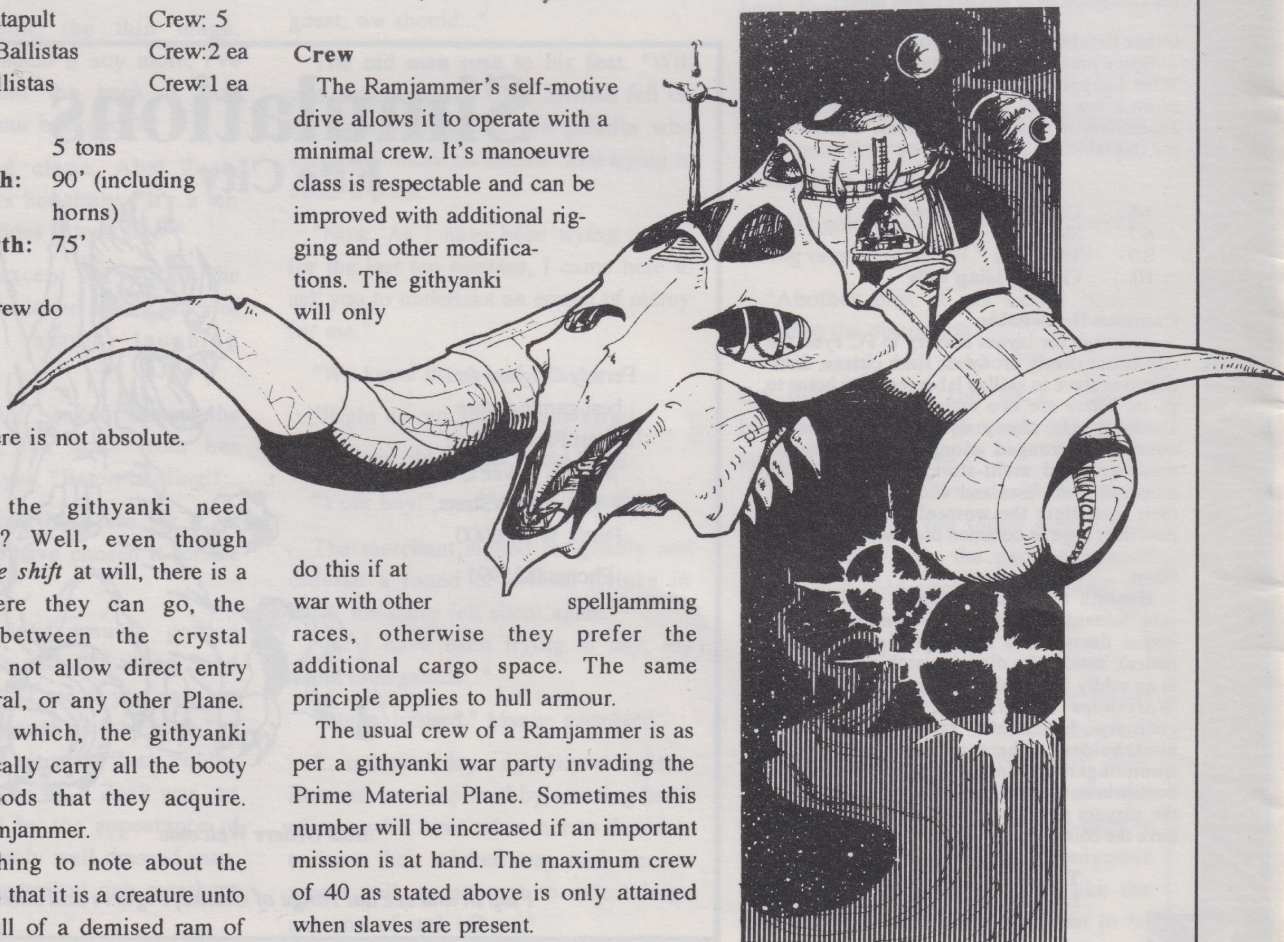
do this if at war with other spelljamming races, otherwise they prefer the additional cargo space. The same principle applies to hull armour.

The usual crew of a Ramjammer is as per a githyanki war party invading the Prime Material Plane. Sometimes this number will be increased if an important mission is at hand. The maximum crew of 40 as stated above is only attained when slaves are present.

Other Facts

Most Ramjammers have a lifejammer for back up (see p38 *Concordance of Arcane Space*). The githyanki have ready access to fuel for this as they are always capturing and enslaving mortals.

The Rams of the Ramjammer are its specialty weapon, often sheathed in steel, each horn of the ram can pierce enemy vessels with one point of damage for every hex the Ramjammer has travelled prior to impacting the target vessel. No chance of becoming stuck and the opponent automatically receives a Hull Holed critical hit effect for each successful hit.



Go Beyond The Game

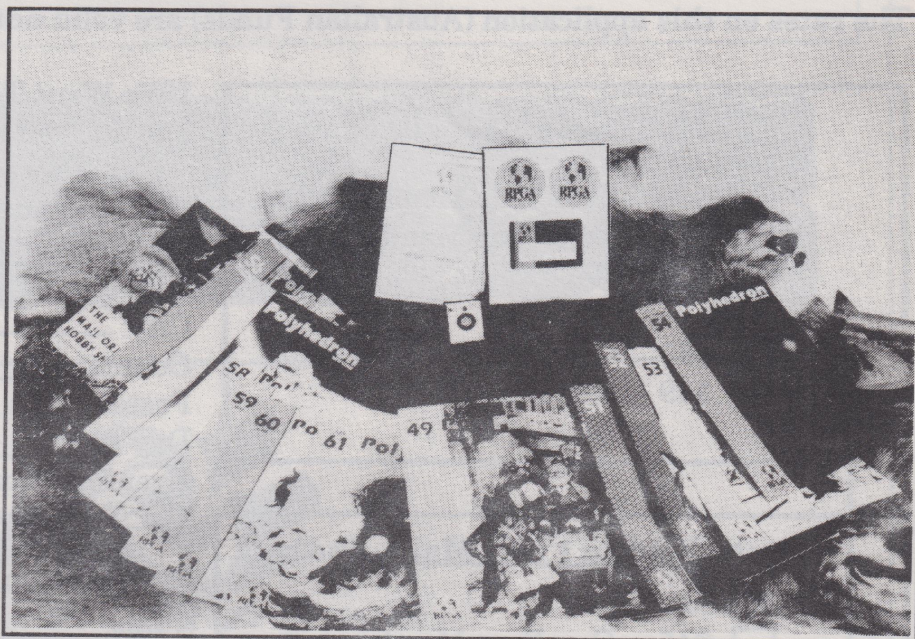
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Larry Niven & Steven Barnes

- The Interview

Questions Posed by Peter Crank.

LARRY NIVEN is one of the top figures in the field of science fiction, having authored five Hugo award-winning works and numerous market-successful novels, including the *Known Space* series, *Ringworld*, and *The Mote in God's Eye*. Beginning with a degree in mathematics from Washburn University, Larry's special interests involve nearly all aspects of current technology.

Mr Niven co-authored with Mr Barnes *Dream Park*, its sequel *The Barsoom Project*, and the third novel in the series, *The California Voodoo Game*.

Mr Niven maintains a long-standing marriage and an optimistic outlook on the human race.

STEVEN BARNES is an author and rising star in the science fiction and cyberpunk genres of fiction. Mr Barnes has authored five published novels including *Street Lethal* and the *The Kundalini Equation*, and has co-authored four novels with Larry Niven including the *Dream Park*™ series.

Steven is currently working on another cyberpunk-genre novel, plus has collaborated with Larry on the third *Dream Park* novel, *The California Voodoo Game*.

Steven also moderates a monthly radio talk show on science fiction topics in LA, and through all of this maintains a healthy relationship with his wife and four year old daughter.

These two authors have particular relevance to the rpg community in that they are heavily involved in one of the gaming world's most ambitious projects - *Dream Park. Australian Realms*, in its continuing effort to keep our readership informed, scored this interview with Niven and Barnes. Through the kind agency of *Dream Park Corporation's* Doug King, our book reviewer, **Peter Crank** asked the following questions.

Peter: As authors with experience in both genres, what trends do you see in Fantasy and Science Fiction writing in the '90s?

Larry: The upsurge in fantasy over science fiction will continue until we repair our damaged educational system.

Steven: I would like to think we are finally gaining ourselves some perspective on ourselves as a technological species. The implications of being such go way beyond exterior implementations, or demonstrations of power. I would hope we are beginning to understand who and what WE are, in a less ethnocentric, intellectual fashion. We understand enough about world myth patterns to see more deeply into these questions, and I hope we rise to the challenge.

Peter: Focussing on the creative drive for a moment, how much of a role do marketing considerations play in Science Fiction writing today? Do you ever feel compelled to meet perceived demands or is it more a 'the hell with it, I'm gonna write what I want to write' situation?

Steven: If you want your story to be heard, you have to pay attention to the market. Hopefully, you do most of your strictly market-oriented work early in your career, so that your instincts become honed, and you automatically are attracted to projects which both satisfy you as a person, and will appeal to an audience.

Larry: I write what I want. But I write to reach anyone who may be entertained by my story.

Peter: The streets are littered with would be writers, as a successful author have you any advice for any of our readers yearning to follow in your footsteps?

Steven: Read ten times as much as you write. Other than that, listen to two

writers: Ray Bradbury and Robert Heinlein. Bradbury said to write a story a week, following the white heat of your passion. Heinlein said five simple rules: 1) Write, 2) Finish what you write, 3) Put it in the mail, 4) Keep it in the mail until it sells, 5) Don't rewrite except to editorial request.

Peter: You've both done work in collaboration with other writers, why is that? Do you enjoy working that way, are there positive creative benefits that outweigh the additional workload?

Steven: Writing can be a terribly lonely activity, and sharing some of that creative space with a friend can be terrific. But collaboration is also extremely difficult work. Unless the two of you, together, can create something stronger than either of you separately, it probably isn't worth it.

Peter: How did you meet? Where did the concept for the 'Dream Park' novels come from?

Larry: We met at Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. Steven was carrying a map of *Dream Park*.

Steven: I needed some professional-level perspective to my writing, so I hunted Larry down at the LASFS. He took an interest in my writing, and gave me the chance to work on an unpublished novelette entitled *The Locusts*. The flaws in that story happened to match my strengths, and it was nominated for a Hugo in 1980. *Dream Park* came from an idea I had about an earthquake at an amusement park, with the rescue efforts hampered by the illusions. Larry was tickled by the idea, and we designed a park. We had so much fun we decided to do a novel set in that world first, and destroy the park later. We haven't gotten around to destroying it yet, but one day...

Peter: Tell us about Dream Park

Corporation? Is the project still on track? What active roles, other than artistic inspiration, do you have in the project?

Steven: The project is on track, but they delayed the presentation of the Dream Park Experience behind by about eight months. This is in realistic consideration of financial and technical matters. Basically, Larry and I keep an overview of the efforts and progress, and offer creative input. Other than that, Mark Matthew-Simmons is in control of the company. We just license him the name.

Peter: Dream Park has the potential to influence in a positive way, public attitudes to traditional role playing games, but doesn't it run the risk of killing traditional RPGs as people migrate to the interactive excitement of Dream Park? Are the established gaming companies showing signs of concern?

Larry: Traditional RPGers aren't scared by the current Dream Park. We're not a serious threat to anything. Besides - Dream Park as envisioned would be expensive. RPGs would still borrow a river/mountain/ desert and run a game on imagination and sweat.

Steven: Do people still play Poker? Jacks? Monopoly? New options only shake out the mediocre. Each form of entertainment or communication has its on unique values. I see the gaming pie expanding, with enough slices for everyone.

Peter: How active a role do you take in gaming?

Steven: I find that gaming takes almost exactly the same kind of energy as writing. When I'm not writing, I like to do something TOTALLY different. Martial arts, or playing with my daughter.

Peter: Some commentators in the media have pointed to the recent troubles in L.A. as being symptomatic of a society headed for self-destruction. As Science Fiction writers do you see that as a valid prognosis for America or is that sort of Cyber-Punk vision of the twenty-first century too pessimistic?

Steven: Oddly enough, I consider the riots a healthy sign. What you have to remember is that the violence you saw has ALWAYS been a part of American culture - from the moment that the first African slaves were kidnapped and

brought here. They were subjected to rape, torture, and starvation. Probably a trillion dollars in labour was extracted from them over a period of eight or so generations. Reparations were never made, and their ancestors, when freed, inherited that cultural debt. Remember - apartheid didn't end in America until the mid-sixties. Some people, black and white, don't think it's ended even now. The amazing thing is that cities haven't burned more often. The murderous rage was triggered by that original kidnapping (compare the single-minded obsession of the Jewish people re: punishment of Nazi war criminals). Not only were slavers never punished, but black children were taught to admire them as the founding fathers of our country!

Conditions have gotten far better in the last few generations, but the rage and pain, always confined to one corner of the population, has remained. White America has passed that responsibility from one generation to the next, a cultural 'Hot Potato' that nobody wants to touch. So...as things get better, the legal and economic pressure which kept that misery confined in one community had begun to lift. Some of that 'steam' escaped. The misery got mixed unto the mainstream, just a tad. People can say all they want about 'the Media', or 'the Left-Wingers', or even 'the Illuminati' causing the riots. The truth is that, plain and simple, human misery concentrated and unvoiced for three hundred years caused 'em. some of that pain is being voiced now. The boil is finally being lanced, and I think it is absolutely the healthiest thing that can happen.

Peter: In the light of the recent upheaval we've seen in America, with the re-opening of old racial wounds, have Science Fiction writers been living up to their social responsibilities, highlighting the injustices in modern Society by addressing these issues in their work? Do you feel that these responsibilities exist?

Steven: I think that the most valuable thing that science fiction writers can do is examine their own feelings about personal and cultural relationships, and the almost inevitable progression toward a World Government. It is going to stand innumerable presuppositions about male-female, black-white-yellow, and rich-poor on their collective ears. I think that it is time that SF writers stop

writing about futures which are, essentially, continuations of today's social relationships. It ain't gonna be like that.

Larry: Writers choose what responsibilities they will honour. Some honour nothing. Some find that saving civilisation is the greatest game.

Peter: Larry, perusing a list of your works in print I noticed a guide to autograph etiquette. What motivated you to produce such a guide? Do you get deeply involved in fandom?

Larry: My back has put me out of the autograph business. Before it did, I learned enough to see that a guide to autograph etiquette was needed. I was on crutches at the Westercon in 1988 when a man blocked my path and demanded an autograph.

Peter: I remember reading somewhere that Arthur C. Clarke cited you as his favourite Science Fiction author. Who is Larry Niven's favourite Science Fiction author?

Larry: No lie, I do not have a favourite science fiction writer. Terry Pratchett is the funniest fantasy writer. I'll buy anything by Gene Wolfe. I like Jack Chalker's multi-volume novels.

Peter: Can you bring our readers up to date on your most recent work? What have you got in store for us in the near future?

Steven: We've started the sequel to *The Legacy of Heorot*. It's going to be FABULOUS!

Larry: *N-Space* and *Playground of the Mind*, a retrospective of my career. *Achille's Choice* with Steven Barnes. *The California Voodoo Game* with Steven Barnes (out now), *The Gripping Hand* with Jerry Pournelle, in February. In England, *The Moat Around God's Eye*. In progress there is *City of Fire*, novella (maybe). *Destiny's Road*, a sequel to *The Legacy of Heorot*, with Jerry Pournelle and Steven Barnes.

Peter: Sincere thanks to both of you for your time and consideration. Good luck with your future projects.

* * *

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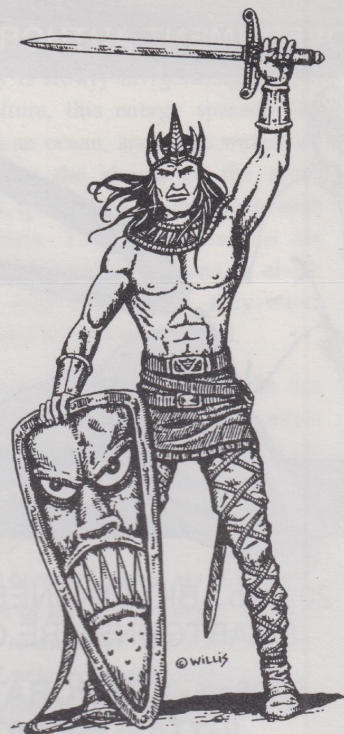
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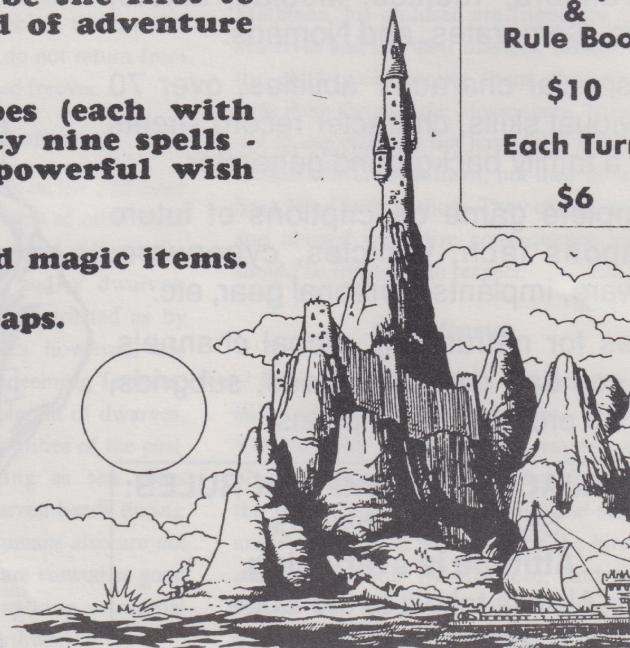
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SHADOWRUN[®]

IN AUSTRALIA

**Part II in our series detailing the effects of
the Awakened Shadowrun World
in the Land Down Under
by Colin Taber**

THE SIXTH WORLD

Last issue we detailed the sequence of events up to 2040AD and their local effects; this issue we look more closely at the reawakened Dreamtime and its lands. In particular, we'll investigate the changes that have occurred in the Exclusion Zone (EZ), the next instalment will focus on the urban Australian nation.

On the 24th of December 2011 the Sixth World dawned. It saw the Australian continent re-energised and turn hostile to non-aboriginals (Eurasians). The creatures of the Dreamtime returned, magic strengthened and its dominance was almost complete. In this reborn land of immense natural power one million corpses of Australians lie.

The Australian nation was nearly destroyed by the return of the Dreamtime; globally, few nations suffered such an unexpected cataclysm and survived. Following those turbulent months that saw a front line stabilised, troubles have never been far away. In this chaotic time every state claimed ill treatment, some made threats of secession, eventually the political map was redrawn.

THE EXCLUSION ZONE

All land outside the Perimeter with the exception of the elven nation of Tir Millae is considered to be in the Exclusion Zone. The Perimeter (or Bunyip Proof Fence as it is popularly called) separates the wilds of the EZ from the territory of the Australian nation. The fence is buried one metre deep and climbs three meters high. The height above ground is electrified and sensors report any breach; armed maintenance teams are only fifteen minutes away. All highway junctions have a manned (by six Army personnel) gate-house that controls travel into the EZ and patrols the borders.

The EZ is the realm of the Dreamtime, but not exclusively. There is, the elven nation of Tir Millae and other smaller areas guarded by metahumans. Groups of bandits do live out in the EZ, living by their wits, harassing salvage operators and prospectors alike. A general rule of the EZ is, if you are careful, and if you are alone, you might get by unnoticed, but large groups of non-aboriginals do seem to attract unwanted

attention from the paranormals. Not too many prospectors work in the EZ, but many salvage operators do. They have been taking out armoured vans and ransacking old country towns for decades. Most of the towns close to the Perimeter have now been picked over, but it all depends on how hard you look whether you'll find anything useful or valuable.

The matrix can still be accessed from the EZ as AOTC and Optus were ordered to keep their lines open by the Federal Government for the military personnel operating in the Zone. Many of the public access points have been damaged and stolen by salvagers over the past forty years, but one in fifty are still operational. It is known that people use the network illicitly. AOTC and Optus have a joint task force which is currently investigating a group of illegal users known only as Marega. This network of users throughout the EZ was originally ignored but are now putting too much traffic through central lines. There is still traffic on old lines that ought to be as dead as the citizens they were laid for.

THE DREAMTIME

To understand the Dreamtime you must first understand and fully appreciate the aboriginal's relationship with the land. In their tribal groups, they developed over forty thousand years an advanced nomadic lifestyle. They depended on the land for everything - food, water and shelter. With this dependence came a mythology that is rooted very deep in nature.

The Dreamtime is a world where man and animal are made of the same stuff, there are for example, tribes of animal people who can change shape at will. It is a dream- scape of many possibilities and creatures. If the stuff of the Dreamtime is going to dominate in your campaign, I would suggest you do some of your own research as it is beyond the scope of this article to give a detailed exposition. What follows is only a brief summary.

In the beginning there was the land, the ocean and the elements, the only life was a few native species and spirits. These spirits crafted the world for man with deities and the characters of legend, the ancestors of the aborigines. This time is known as the Dreaming, it is a seemingly eternal time of Goanna people, human tribes and much more. From this

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time come the aboriginals, the offspring of the spirits and deities.

ABORIGINAL LIFE

There are three types of aborigines extant in 2040AD Australia; those of the Dreamtime, those living in the Australian nation and metahuman aborigines of the Awakened world. Many aborigines who lived in the outback prior to the Awakening of the Sixth World have stayed there and live a traditional lifestyle, including the initiation rituals associated with coming of age. Some of these groups have occupied deserted towns for a time but as is their nomadic way, they move on. These aborigines have vast amounts of bush lore and information on Dreamtime creatures. They will come to the aid of stranded folk but expect any visitors to do their share and then, when ready, move on. Most tribes have retained the English language, but it is a second language known only to some members of each group. Instead, each aboriginal group within the Exclusion Zone has reverted to its tribal tongue - a few score of which survived the Eurasian settlement of Australia.

Aborigines are still present in urban Australian society, though they are more comfortably integrated than in the past. Most aboriginals who hold Australian citizenship have turned their back on the Dreamtime to some extent, with the exception of some who work as agents of the EZ communities. All aboriginals feel the call of the Dreamtime, strength or wrath.

After the events of the Sixth World, aboriginals became very prominent in Australian society, particularly in the fields of advisers, guide and teachers of the lost territories. With what had happened to the island continent and the subsequent flow-on effects of such things as compulsory courses on 'Dreamtime Survival', it did not take long for aboriginals to take pride in achievements such as the first aboriginal Australian president, elected on the 14th March 2022. President James Nanung was defeated in federal elections after two terms in office by the first president of Asian descent, the Democrats' Sean Ng.

Many metahumans of aboriginal descent live inside the Perimeter as Australian citizens, though many aboriginal elves have made the trip 'home' to Tir Millae. It is fair to say that this group holds a great deal of mystique in society as it is both aboriginal and meta. Most metahumans from aboriginal EZ communities band together or come to the Perimeter gates for admission to Australia. Any metahuman will likely be helped by tribal groups in the EZ but they attract the hostility of the Dreamtime critters just like Eurasian Australians.

If contact is made with any aboriginals the tribe will not want to be with the character or party for more than a day, if



this means forcing the the party away they will do so rather than spending two nights with the 'magnets'. Of course, there are exceptions to this rule, scouts, for instance will regularly assist non-aboriginals.

ABORIGINAL MAGIC

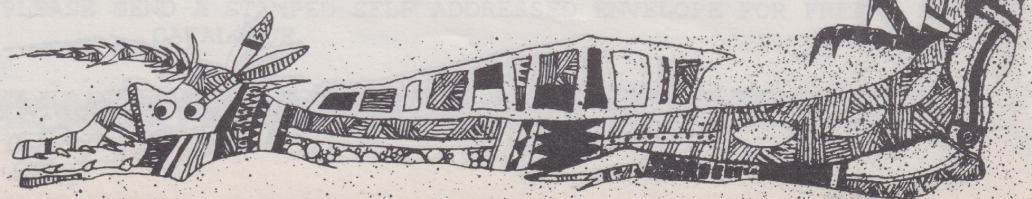
The more powerful Dreamtime magic spells are quite subtle, just as effective as a fireball but often much slower in coming. A sorcerer can kill someone by magic, but the land will complete the action. For example, if a spell is cast to kill (death magic) an individual, the victim may live for several unsettling days or even weeks when strange portents will hound him, and when death does collect it will be through an 'accident'. Should a player character be cursed they may not be directly affected until hit by a runaway car, a fallen branch, or some other 'freak' accident or illness.

There are three types of magic, these are; Beneficent Magic, Love Magic and Sorcery. Beneficent Magic deals with detection and health spells, and Love Magic is self explanatory. Sorcery is the most potent of the three.

The best known types of sorcery are the death magics such as 'pointing the bone', magic powder and the 'Bi' which is a bark equivalent of the voodoo doll. All three types can kill, or if desired, make the victim very ill (is that all? Ed). The term of illness depends on the caster. Details of these spells follow the information on totems. The other types of sorcery are aligned with the Shadowrun Combat Magic, Illusion and Manipulation Spells.

SHAMANIC TRADITION

Aboriginal sorcerers use totems, often having more than one. The totems cover specific aspects of their lives - their tribal affiliations, sex and family. Listed below are several



totems that relate only to magic. Details of the new totems follows. For additional information on totems refer to the Shadowrun rule book.

TOTEMS

Exclusion Zone

Crocodile
Dingo
Emu
Kangaroo
Snake (serpent)

Urban Zone

Dog
Possum
Rat
Snake

Crocodile

Characteristics: Crocodile is a patient but strong warrior, a loner who strives to be master. Often thought of as wise, his strength is mainly in his knowledge gathering through waiting, watching and surviving.

Environment: tropic waterways.

Advantages: +2 for all combat & illusion spells; +2 on conjuring all river/water spirits.

Disadvantages: a Crocodile sorcerer will not be pushed, he is a loner and his own master.

Dingo

Characteristics: refer to 'Dog' in Shadowrun p76.

Environment: the Excluded Zone.

Advantages: refer to 'Dog' in Shadowrun p76.

Disadvantages: refer to 'Wolf' p77.

Emu

Characteristics: Emu is curious but cautious. He is happiest in groups and loyal to these. For Emu, being cautious means fleeing swiftly, some call this quality cowardice, many of those people aren't around any more.

Environment: the Excluded Zone.

Advantages: +2 dice for detection spells.

Disadvantages: Emu has a -1 dice modifier when conjuring wind spirits.

Kangaroo

Characteristics: Kangaroo is fast, strong and brave. He is a mighty warrior who is no loner, never shying away from work, fight or travel. He is master of the EZ and as easily associated with it as Uluru.

Environment: the Excluded Zone.

Advantages: +2 dice for detection and combat spells.

Disadvantages: Kangaroo shamans are adept at many things but can be bettered by specific opponents and they are hunted by many.

Dog - refer to Shadowrun rule book p76.

Possum - treat as Raccoon, see Shadowrun rule book p76.

Rat - refer to Shadowrun rule book p76.

Snake (Serpent in EZ) - refer Shadowrun rule book p76.

DEATH MAGICS

Pointing the Bone: to cast this spell properly you need to be within 40 meters of the intended victim. It requires a bone which the sorcerer points at the victim. Curing the casting some of the blood of the victim moves invisibly to the bone and then down a string attached to the bone into a receptacle. Once the blood is heated, the illness worsens, should the bone and blood be burned, the victim will die.

Drain: 3

Magic Powder: is made from the crushed scapula bone of a dead and decomposed woman. The powder, according to aboriginal ritual, must be sprinkled in flour, tea or on meat. A small amount will cause a long, lingering illness while a

larger dose will ensure death within a fortnight. Once the powder is produced it must be used immediately or it will have no effect.

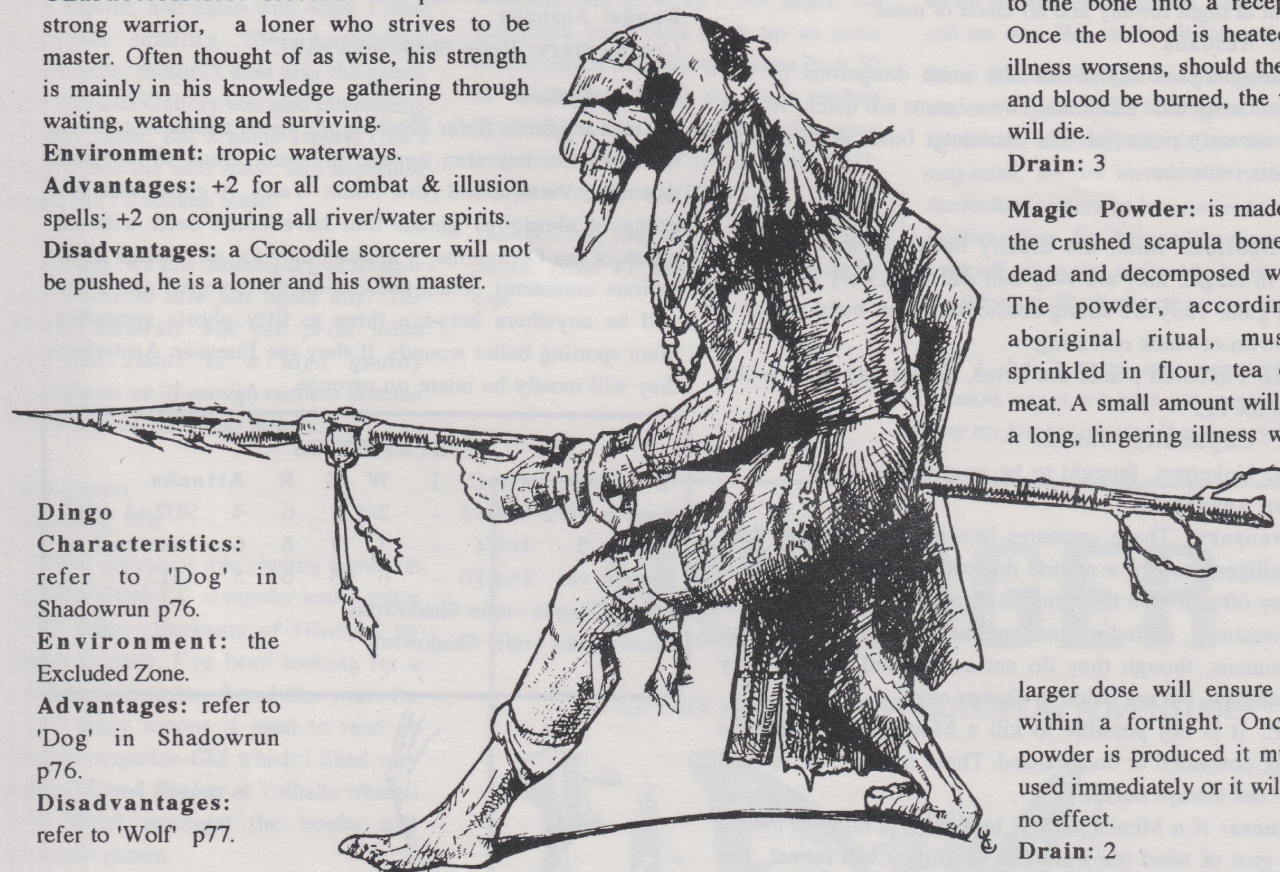
Drain: 2

The Bi: to cast this spell the sorcerer will need to make a bark, reed or grass bi doll of the victim. He must stab it with a pointed stick and whip it with a cane while singing the victim's name in a ritual song. As he does this the victim will become ill. Eventually, when the effigy begins to break up, the victim will die.

Drain: 3

ARCHETYPES

The archetype of the street shaman on p47 of the Shadowrun rule book will suffice for what is called a Street Sorcerer in Australia. The shaman archetype on p44 should be used for the Aboriginal Sorcerer of the EZ. It should be remembered that the use of decorative and representative body paint is important to the Sorcerer, facial paint will be the norm, not masks.



DREAMTIME CRITTERS

Bunyip

Identification: Bunyips are very large and wild marsupials, they are over two metres long and very bulky. They can be vaguely compared to a grizzly bear but have larger sized front and rear limbs and a larger jaw. These creatures are of mostly brown and occasionally dark grey short fur. It is rumoured that some Bunyips are able to change shape.

Habitat: Bunyips live in many areas, they will not be found in the open desert and will always be found in or near water. They will sometimes be encountered in sewers.

Magic Capability: Unknown.

Habits: Nocturnal. The Bunyip is a powerful predator and will hunt at night for any and all kinds of meat.

Range: Australia

Commentary: Bunyips are the most dangerous of the common Dreamtime creatures. These beasts are quick, violent and awesomely powerful. The Perimeter fence does well to stay their intrusion.

Mimi

Identification: Mimi are usually between two and three metres in height, they are very thin and wiry, only thick as a sapling gum. They are strong considering their build and of a deep brown or black colouring.

Habitat: Favoured places are caves, gorges and other rocky areas of the EZ.

Magic Capability: Innate.

Habits: Unknown, thought to be nocturnal.

Range: Australia.

Commentary: These creatures live in small groups, they are intelligent and of a neutral disposition. They are so thin that they often live in the thin cracks of a rock face, grabbing other creatures, including humans, as they pass. They may help humans, though they do not understand English only tribal tongues, but are quick to change sides.

Power: It is not possible to kill a Mimi, but they can be stopped, cowarded or demoralised. These creatures do not die but are not always hostile.

Weakness: If a Mimi's neck is broken by a blow or even a strong gust of wind (they are that thin) they will retreat. The creatures are intelligent and will not look for trouble, just easy pickings.

Serpents

Identification: These creatures are basically larger and more intelligent snakes, they range in length from four to one hundred metres. The largest is the Rainbow Serpent, but no solid proof has been found that it has returned to Dreamtime Australia. Serpents are thick, very strong and often very colourful.

Habitat: All over the EZ, favouring gorges.

Magic Capability: Some larger Serpents are reputed to use Shamanic powers but most have no such skills.

Habits: Being cold-blooded Serpents are most active during the day. In the hotter areas of Australia this may not hold true. The breeding season of Serpents is in the early spring, when they are at their most dangerous.

Range: Australia.

Commentary: Serpents are viewed with great caution by aboriginal tribes in the EZ as they are wise, very strong and unpredictable. They are also seen symbolically in many Exclusion Zone tribes as the sacred life giver.

Power: Fear.

Animal People

Identification: These people are shape-shifters (refer Shadowrun p187). The animal forms they can take are varied but all native to Australia. The most common types are Goanna and Snake men.

Habitat: Varied, the EZ.

Magic Capability: Refer Shadowrun p187.

Habits: Refer Shadowrun p187.

Range: Australia

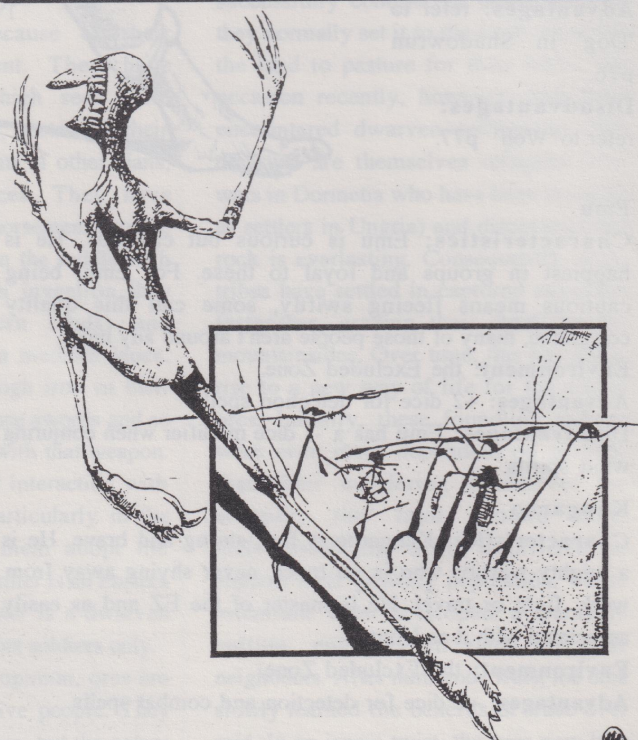
Commentary: Refer Shadowrun p187.

Ghost Tribes

Treat as ghosts (refer Shadowrun), these are most common in Tasmania but also appear in some areas of Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. A ghost tribe is a group of aboriginal ghosts that have come back with the return of the Dreamtime, it appears they are all victims of the various massacres committed during the colonial era. There will be anywhere between three to fifty ghosts appearing, often sporting bullet wounds. If they see Eurasian Australians they will mostly be intent on revenge.

STATISTICS

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Bunyip	10/2	4x4	15	-	2/4	3	6	4 9D2,+1 reach
Mimi	5	4x4	4	-	3	4	6	Humanoid
Serpent var	3x4	10	-	6	5	6	5	5M2
Animal People - refer Shadowrun								
Ghost Tribes - refer Shadowrun								



Letters

Dave Capon
Bedford, WA

I loved the cover art, and hope to see the availability of the covers as posters some time in the future. Even as a Limited Collectors Edition! I especially liked the change to the "Realms" word on the cover. I think the runic look it has now has much more appeal.

The AD&D Guide to Narnia was a bit of a surprise, and again well done. I also enjoyed reading the Australian Shadowrun, though I don't play the game. The Monster Gallery was also interesting, though again, not a game I play. Can't wait to see the next issue, and hopefully some RIFTS coming soon!!

Posters. We are thinking about it. How does everyone else feel about this? The RIFTS material will see print when someone sends in a high quality submission, or, if enough readers demand it, we'll train one of our writers!

Alan Fenton
Serpentine, WA

I play adventure role playing games on my Macintosh LC computer and a space PBM game (*Darkness of Silverfall* by Roma Games). I've been looking for a magazine Australian based like yours for many many moons. I used to read an English magazine *GM* which I liked very much. I found *Realms* at Valhalla where I lurk about amongst the books and computer games.

I liked 'Adventures of the A-Team' very much and hope there will be more of the same. I would like to see how players do their book keeping when playing PBM and other games. For instance how and with what they map, how and what programs they use on computers to do calculations. I would like to see some articles on strategies for PBM and computer games.

See our new Dice are Dead column for more on Play-By-Mail games. Yes we intend to continue the 'Adventures of the A-Team' as it received more approval mail than any other article in issue #6. Andrew is using this sudden burst of popularity to demand more space... back into your box, Daniels!

Troy Baker
Kingston, QLD

I just got issue six in the mail and love it! Shadowrun in Australia was very interesting. I hope FASA pick up Colin Taber's work. I can't wait for the next part of the A-Team. The only criticism I have is that Realms is too short. With the PBM column and Realms campaign, maybe your size will grow by a few pages. Do you think you could work up an extra sixteen pages (increasing Realms from 32 to 48 pages)? What do other readers think? Other than that one suggestion, your magazine is the best I've seen since GMI. See ya round like a d100!

Thanks, Troy. Yes, we're working on extra pages; Issue #7 has already grown by 4pp.

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Dear Australian Realms Staff,
Our congratulations on a wonderful magazine. We were extremely impressed by the content. We are confident you will maintain the high standard you have now set. It will be wonderful to be able to have an all Australian magazine, which we can call our own. We can't wait for next issue.

More kind words and encouragement, all sincerely appreciated. We agree with your sentiments entirely, this is not the staff's magazine, we are merely the custodians. Australian gamers at large own Australian Realms. Thus far the positive response you have all given us indicates we are doing the job right. We'll always seek to improve.

PS: I didn't print any negative mail because, as yet, we have not received any. I keep my fingers crossed that we never will!

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ORCS of UNAE

Not all orcs are big, ugly and dumb. Truly! The Orcs of the Realms Campaign World, Unae, can prove it! They've even learned to adopt the wheel. The shopping trolley can't be far behind!

Adam Whitt presents a foretaste of the Australian Realms Campaign.

Appearance

Unae orcs are shortish (male average 5'10", females average 5'6"), stocky humanoids with greyish skin. They are beardless, have almost exclusively black hair (usually kept long and worn as a top knot and tail), grey through to dark brown to black eyes (almond shaped), and have pronounced canines. Long days in the saddle have given the swaggering males a bow-legged gait.

Origins

Orcs of Unae originated in the vast steppe region extending from the borders of Ungria to the east and north across Central Unae to the Amalayan Mountains in the far east. Their homeland is a horizonless sea of meagre grasslands, buried in snow for six months of the year. Orcs have adapted to this world by pursuing a nomadic lifestyle herding sturdy, long-haired, short-legged horses and some ox-like cattle both native to the region. The harsh climate of the steppes means they have to range far and wide to find sufficient fodder for their herds, this inevitably brings them into contact with other races. Being a hardy, hard headed and belligerent race, these interactions with other races rarely go smoothly. Orcs frequently clash with their neighbours.

Lifestyle

Orcs live in close knit family groups. These familial bands travel together as related clans that occasionally amass into tribal nations at times of religious festival or war. When travelling the steppes in search of new pastures they travel light. The 'blooded' males act as outriders on the fleet footed ponies, screening the herd and clans from attack. The younger men goad the herds and the older men handle the oxen that pull their slow, solid wheeled carts. The women and remaining children walk, carrying what loads they can manage. The female children carry horsehide sacks in which they collect the dung of the herd. At need, they make

camp at traditional sites close to an abundant water supply, erecting horsehide tents and making camp fires from the dried dung of the herd. In the desperate times of deep winter, orcs have been known to eat each other.

At festival times the clans gather at centrally located sites of ancient significance where they build turf huts and erect a massive tent using long poles stored permanently at the site. During these summer days of relative plenty, the males compete in wild horse races, mounted archery events and wrestling (oiling themselves with ox fats). The females and children also have their amusements, tormenting slaves (the booty of past forays into neighbouring states). At night, the clans feast on roast horse flesh, horse milk cheeses and sup on a vile tasting, fermented milk drink known as yurk.

Combat

Orcs are tough because of their homeland environment. They have adapted to a life which sees them constantly on the move, protecting their herds from the predations of other clans, and neighbouring races. They have developed into superb horsemen, capable of firing accurately from the saddle with the composite bow (an invention they acquired from Eastern lands) and extremely adept with a medium lance. They do not have enough iron in their homeland to mass produce swords and so are not as comfortable with that weapon. In recent decades, their interaction with neighbouring states, particularly in the mountains, has seen them adopt the scimitar and axe. The former is an Eastern influence whilst the latter is a dwarven derivative and used by foot soldiers only.

Contrary to popular opinion, orcs are not a naturally aggressive people. They prefer a peaceful existence, but the nature of their environment forces them to often encroach on surrounding lands. As the

pressures of increasing population and decreasing pasture builds, the clans spill into the more verdant lands of their neighbours. Inevitably this leads to conflict, and the cult of the warrior is quite pronounced in the orcish make-up so that they inevitably win a lot of ground. This lends them a reputation for savagery and aggression. They also have some unusual rituals in which they belittle, behead and broil their prisoners. These practises do not endear them to their enemies. Over time these factors of basic survival for the orcs has generated a negative public image for the nation as a whole. Being of a different race, different language, different culture and different traditions has not helped their case either. To all the 'civilised' races, the barbaric orcs are considered fair game.

Recent History

Orcs are not builders. But they readily adapt to all environments. When they successfully conquer an urbanised area they normally set it to the torch, returning the land to pasture for their herds. On occasion recently, however, they have encountered dwarven settlements (the dwarves are themselves refugees from wars in Dormetia who have been accepted as settlers in Ungria) and discovered that rock is everlasting. Consequently, some tribes have settled in captured mountain fastnesses, grazing their stock on the mountainsides. Over time, this has given rise to a new way of life for the settled orcs. Initially, these founding nations were even more dependent on plunder than their wandering cousins of the steppes; the land around their underground city being insufficient to support their growing population. These mountain orcs developed a parasitic culture, engaging in raids on their neighbours. After numerous wars, the orcs slowly learned the benefits of trade over raid. In an ironic twist, the orcs now hire the very dwarvish miners and artisans they ousted from these underground cities to

work in their mines and manufacture trade goods. The mountain orcs are gradually evolving into a 'civilisation'. And they do not get along too well with the steppe orcs. The orcs of the steppes reckon the mountain orcs have gone soft; they cannot understand their static lifestyle, and keep their deep distrust of other, non-orc races.

The Great Orkhan

Every so often, the orc tribes outgrow the available land mass and strange racial stirrings awaken. The friction between the tribes ferments a period of feverish intra-racial warring that once in a blue moon produces a mighty war leader. This war leader will weld the tribes into one nation. The Great Orkhan gains almost godlike powers in the eyes of the general run of orcs, they will obey his every command with fanatical devotion. Fifty years past, the last Great Orkhan, Gurgis Khan, led the entire steppe orc nation into Ungria and beyond, leaving a trail of devastation never seen before, one in three Ungrians were slaughtered or captured and led off into slavery. The orcs followed their usual pattern of reducing all villages to rubble, clearing forests and burning crops to turn the land over to pasture. A few walled towns along the rivers and coasts withstood the onslaught, and survived as islands within a maelstrom of orcish anarchy.

For a brief period of thirty years, the orcs ruled an Empire that stretched from the shores of the Great Rift Sea to the Amalayan Mountains. Then mysteriously, Gurgis Khan took ill and died. His succession was disputed by three sons, Weltra, Argatan and Groggo. The orcs fell into a state of civil war, the Empire crumbled and the tribes retreated back into the steppes. Those orcs that were left behind were hunted and slain by the elf, dwarf and human populations that reviled them. Today, Ungria is still in a state of slow recuperation from this bloody period in recent history. Many miles of once fertile farmland lie empty in the Ungrian heartlands.

Scenario Ideas

There are only so many times that players will fall for the 'orcs are dumb and fractious but this really powerful wizard dude has hired them anyway' routine. The Orcs of Unae have their own agenda. They don't hire out to anyone - at least not the whole tribe! Occasionally a progressive orc might be found in the employ of a slaver or merchant, but generally orcs will be encountered going

about their own business, getting things done for their own purposes in that inimically irascible orcish way.

Some suggested openings for orcish encounters follow.

Orcs Go Shopping

The civilised orcs of the mountain breed descend from their strongholds in the spring to sell the ore that the dwarves have delved on their behalf to the cities of Ungria. The orcs use their cash earnings from the ore to purchase essential manufactured goods from the skilled artisans of the cities. The trip to and from the cities are fraught with danger for the caravans as the rural populace, that which remains, hates and reviles the orcs and will harass them. Adventurers might be hired by local villagers, much like the *Seven Samurai*, to protect the simple peasant folk from the perceived orcish threat. Otherwise they might have been personally affected by the Orc invasion and be looking to revenge themselves on the orcs. Another possibility is that the PCs are hired by the orcs to protect their caravans against the human and elvish militia that seek to waylay them on their way to market.

The cities of Ungria are willing to accept the orc trade because their citizens managed to avoid being despoiled during Gurgis Khan's conquest by hiding behind their stout city walls. Besides, a few drops of blood spilt in the past should never be allowed to get in the way of honest commerce. However, orc traders are treated with some distaste and distrust and the Ungrian merchants often try to cheat them. This leads to friction and occasional scrapes that involve town guards or even PCs sent to remove the orcs from the city.

Watch Your Steppe

Sane Player Characters (sic) will not willingly venture out into the steppes where the tribes wander. If they do, devious referees will relish the effect on PCs of being hunted like game across an endless grassland with nowhere to hide.

Or maybe one of the PCs is an orc with a claim to the Great Orkhan throne? How to weld together the innumerable factions, the great warriors, the deeply superstitious and all-important shamans, and the constantly bickering womenfolk?

There are many challenging possibilities when you discard the notion that orcs are big, ugly, dumb and unrelentingly viscious. Mind you, I'm not saying it is easy to reason with a Unae Orc, just that it is possible!



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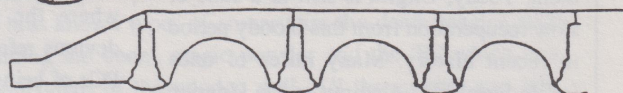
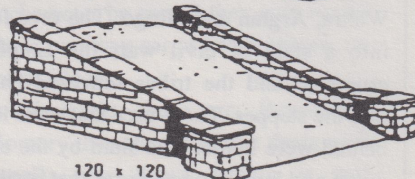
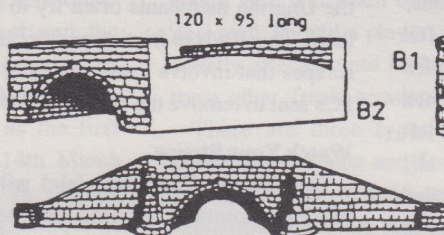
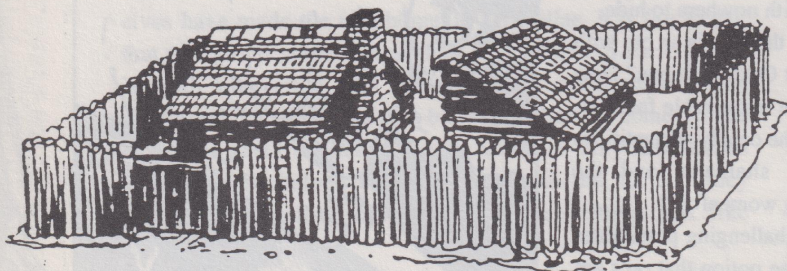
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CATALOGUE

Sea Elf Characters in Warhammer Fantasy Role Play™

by Colin Taber

The warm breeze carried the smell of the sea across the deck as the ship gently coasted through the warm, dark night of the ocean. Galleos looked up into the sky, it was clear and moonless. The runes of Rota-Himmel, spirit friend of the Sea Elves, shone down upon the world, revealing the way. He thanked his friend for her help, and looked ahead. Across the water he could see the welcoming lights of Merrantalla, the sea elven port city of Lustria. He called to those upon the deck and many walked to the railings and watched as they approached their home.



Sea Elf Culture

Sea Elves are the most tolerant branch of the elven race. To the other types of elves they are thought of as warriors, the military might upon the sea. This is only part of the truth, they are also the main contact between humanity and the Elven Kingdoms; in essence, ambassadors of the elven world. As a sub race they are a very distinct group. Physically they look similar to wood or high elves, the only visible difference is their more compact limbs. Differences in regard to their mentality are much more pronounced.

They spend as much of their lives travelling as not, and the home port of a sea elf will often be part of a human city, both factors force a cultural mix. It is this mix with humanity which has diluted the 'elven' perspective of sea elves. Sometimes they seem all too human.

Close proximity to humans has caused two important changes in the sea elven outlook. They are no longer complacent, their culture not static, in contrast to the lives led by other elves. They have adapted to a human rhythm; although they still hold some elven views of time, they

regret a lost day as a lost opportunity. The other change is the waning of the natural elven cool. Compared to wood or high elves, those of the sea are quite moody.

Sea elves have readily accepted lodging with humans because of its convenience. Their good treatment by their hosts encourages good relations between the races. Now, as colonisation slows, sea elves concentrate on keeping the waterways of the world open and working for themselves. Sea elven culture is based upon four foundation stones: the clan, sea, military and trade.

The Clan

The clan is the basic social block of any sea elf community. All clans have their origins in Ulthuan. Should a clan grow too large for Ulthuan it boards a huge clan-ship, the largest seagoing ship constructed by the elves, and leaves to find a new home. When the new home is chosen, the clan-ship is beached. The ship can carry up to six thousand and will form the nucleus of the port. Should the clan elect to settle in an established port, they will ask the local authorities for permission to take a section of the city for themselves - many Old World ports have a thriving sea elf quarter. The new port becomes the clan's base of operations for all things but war.

The structure of the clan is determined by lineage, which also dictates likely careers and status for individuals. The only position in the clan not determined by birth is that of the Elder. The Elder is the head of the clan, in charge of the merchant fleet in times of crisis or war (in which the fleet can be made battle ready within a day) and he runs the day to day business of the port. The Elder is elected at a full clan meeting called the Konveniporio (literally, 'meeting for all') held every century or on the death of an Elder. If a sea elf misses his clan's Konveniporio he must be pardoned by the elected Elder, else live in shame. Loyalty is a very important facet of clan life, any sea elf would willingly die for its clan, few exceptions exist.

The Sea

The importance of the sea is as obvious as it is misunderstood. Although other elves realise its importance, they do not know the depth of the raw feelings that sea elves have for the sea and their respect for it. Humans misunderstand more than they understand of this. The majority of sea elves follow Mathlann, god of the seas. All respect him and worship him or his kin, the spirit friends.

Sea elves see the ocean as both friend and foe, it is its own being. They appreciate two types of tides; the literal tide of high and low water, but also the tide of fury, sometimes in, but thankfully, usually out.

The Military

The race prides itself on its military tradition. Sea elves have long been responsible for the majority of the elven military, perhaps because they are quite often the victims of opening hostilities.

The large battles of the past are something not likely to be seen again as the sea elves have declined in numbers since the Elf-Dwarf wars. A sea elf devotes five decades of its life to service in the clan naval fleets, holding dual positions of merchant and soldier.

Most military actions now are against human ships prying near the elven kingdoms, or against the dark elves of Naggaroth who occasionally attack sea elfen settlements.

Trade

The merchant fleet of a clan will cross the seas trading all that is available in the world, from fine wines to furniture and spice. Nowadays, trading is the main function of the clans, most of their energies are directed towards it and consequently their results are mostly very rewarding. Sea elf clans are wealthy, the settlement in Marienburg, for example, is very well to do. The highest standard of living is attained by sea elves living with their clan, some humans liken them to princes. In some ports the name has stuck and the rich elves are called 'merchant princes'.

The Free Spirit

When a sea elf comes of age he or she leaves the clan for ten years to travel. This leave does not allow for an absence should the Koveniporio occur during the time the elf will be away, but apart from that, no other ties to the clan remain. The purpose of the 'free spirit' is to assuage the need to travel independently in the young elf who might be entertaining the idea. When they return they are usually more than happy to serve their clan, being in a better position to appreciate the benefits of clan life. Any who do not return from their travelling are exiled forever.

Sea Elven Outlook

The sea elven outlook on life and other races is very similar to that of other elves except for two fundamental differences; their view of humans and of dwarves. Dwarves are generally distrusted as by other elves, sea elves however, are quicker to look for redeeming features. Essentially, they are tolerant of dwarves, having forgiven the hostilities of the past. This is no small thing as sea elves suffered greatly at dwarven hands during the Elf-Dwarf wars. Humans also are not completely trusted but are viewed as good trading partners and, as long as mutual benefit applies, as a worthwhile ally.

To other elves, these attitudes are evidence of a taint of something primal. Humanity is slowly invigorating the sea elven culture, this energy spreads like waves on an ocean, and these waves are crashing on the shores of the elven kingdoms, spreading slow change through their society. These repercussions are recognised by neither humans or elves. Only the dark elves notice, they watch their kindred with growing hatred.

The dark messenger entered the last and largest hall. It was lit by a single brazier, a fire-red glow stood out on the face of his master. A bloodied knife was fingered in a powerful hand, deep eyes looked up.

"I have been to Lothorn, my Master."

The lips of the Master curled, the knife dropping to the floor. The sounds of the stone and metal echoed through the hall.

"And what do our weakling kin do in their toy city?"

"They have just welcomed returned musicians from the nations of man. The taint of man is now heard in our songs and music, now it is the music of man."

"What fools they are, can they not see what man does to them? We will one day save them from themselves. For that day we must ready ourselves."

Religion

The sea elves follow one 'god', he is Mathlann, the god of the seas. Mathlann has two children called 'spirit friends'. Sea elven initiates and priests of Mathlann follow the same guidelines as those applicable to Manann. Priests are called 'Messengers' due to the unique nature of elvish interaction with their gods. Like Mathlann, his children are friends of the sea elves and not their masters. Instead of the elves worshipping them, they deal with them through the Messengers. This is not to say elves do not have faith in their 'deities'. Elves trust them, but they do not have blind faith in them. They can be used and abused with dire consequence and should be treated with respect.

Rota-Himmel

She is the spirit friend for the night, stars and navigation. Her name means 'Glowing Sky', she points the way for sea elven ships and traders, always showing the path home. She represents the skies and everything in them such as the birds, stars, the moon (Mannslieb), and the clouds. The stars are her most important attribute as elves rely upon them for

navigation - they do not use maps. Rota-Himmel is pictured as a young elven woman with long black flowing hair. She is a spirit friend of knowledge.

Senparae

He is the spirit friend for negotiation, dealing and trade. His name means to communicate freely, he represents many things. Some humans misunderstand him, thinking of him as a god of trade. This is in his sphere but so too are conversation, relationships and land. Senparae is summarised by what the sea elves actually do in ports. It may be their home, where they trade, but most importantly it is where they live in community. It would be more correct for humans to call him god of the clan, even perhaps of life.

Senparae is pictured as a merchant always standing on dry land but with the sea on the horizon, he is never pictured alone. Messengers of Senparae are more gregarious than normal sea elves and will habitually seek company and conversation.

Basic Sea Elf Listing

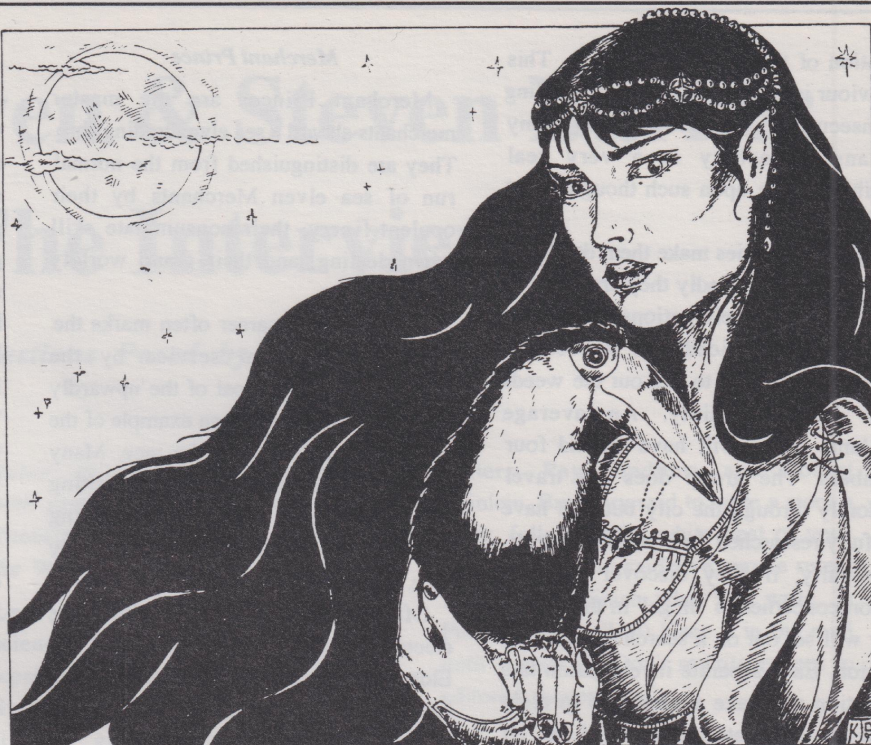
To roll up a sea elf character follow the listing shown at the bottom of this page.

Sea elves all have the skills of *orientation* and *sailing*. They have equal chance of having either *excellent vision*, *fish*, *row* or *boat building*.

Sea elves have the normal d3-1 fate points and use all other elf information such as age, height and weight. For Careers reference the chart given at the end of this article. Careers are slightly different, below are some new careers which are only available to sea elves, or high and wood elves living with a sea elf clan.

Diver

Used for varying tasks, sea elf Divers are trained for endurance and to carry out specialised work underwater; repairing the hull of a ship, cleaning the hull of marine growths such as barnacles and diving for valuable sea goods eg. pearls and abalone. Divers are well known for holding their breath. They are also known to be powerful swimmers and capable of fighting underwater when attacked by sea creatures. The best Seaman will often go on to the more dangerous career of Diver, with more danger often comes a greater reward. A Diver fights with no modifiers when engaged in combat in the water. The new skill of Diving is detailed below.



Diver Advance Scheme

S+1, T +2, W +1, I +10,
CI+20, WP +20

Skills

Diving*, Sixth Sense, Swim, Very Resilient.

Trappings

Knives (2), Spear

Career Entries

Boatman, Marine, Seaman

Career Exits

Merchant, Navigator, Pilot, Sea Captain

**Diving* encompasses the ability to operate effectively underwater for greater lengths of time than usual. Any character with this skill can stay underwater for up to five minutes. To use the skill, the character must also have the skill, *Swim*.

Vigilante

A unique part of sea elf society is the emergence of vigilante groups. They shadow the local militia (usually unknown to it) of the sea elven quarter in coastal cities. To understand why these groups have evolved and what exactly they are about, we must look firstly at the independent nature of sea elven ghettos within human cities.

Whether the quarter is a small section

of the wharf side or perhaps physically quite a large part of the main city, it is legally independent from the rest of the metropolis. When the sea elf clan first arrives at a port and decides to make the place its home, it seeks the permission of the local authorities to allow the clan to land and to rule its own affairs. Human authorities have to decide whether they are prepared to give away part of their city. If so, are they then prepared to have a part of their city where their guards are not allowed to enter. The benefits of having a clan based in a port always tempt the local rulers, usually they give their permission and the most run down part of the wharf is cleared of beggars and thieves then handed to the elves.

While the clan's militia keeps their quarter clean and safe they can do nothing for the rest of the city where they have no jurisdiction. This is the Vigilantes' role. They spread through the rest of the city after dark seeking out one specific type of law breaker (in their eyes), that is, chaos cultists among the human population. Most vigilantes will, once they have tracked down their prey, lure them near or into the elven quarter. Once the victim is in an elven controlled area it can be killed without arousing the

Basic Sea Elf Listing

M	WS	BS	S	T	W	I
D3+2	2D10+30	2D10+20	D3+1	D3+1	D3+3	2D10+50
A	Dex	Ld	Int	CI	WP	Fel
1	2D10+40	2D10+30	2D10+40	2D10+30	2D1+30	2D10+30

attention of the human authorities. This behaviour is inspired by the elves' feeling of insecurity living amongst so many humans. Treachery is a very real possibility, it is upon such thoughts that they act.

Vigilante abilities make them deadly to their enemies, but sadly they are small in number. Also, their actions do not go completely unnoticed and it becomes increasingly harder to dig out the weeds from human society. An average Vigilante group will have around four members. The group does not travel randomly through the city but will have carefully researched their possible targets. Eventually, if they discover that the person concerned is 'illegal' in their eyes, they will set out on a search and destroy mission. Each separate investigation and execution will take a group up to eight weeks to complete. A group of sea elf vigilantes may spend up to four nights a week on a suspect, hiding what they are doing from the rest of the clan. The clan, regardless of whether it approves of vigilantes or not, cannot officially help them as it is deemed interference with the human city's affairs. Such actions breach the original agreement made between the city and the clan.

The reaction from local human authorities where these groups are known to operate is usually one of feigned ignorance. Where municipal militia are under great pressure from the criminal and chaotic elements of the Old World they often welcome the aid of sea elf vigilantes. Other cities, however demand a stop, claiming this activity is both unlawful and dangerous. Often it is in these cities that vigilantes are most needed.

Vigilante Advance Scheme

WS +20, BS +10, S +1, W +3
I +10, A +1, Cl +10

Skills

Ambidextrous, Disarm, Dodge Blow, Silent Move-Urban, Specialist Weapon - Throwing Knives, Strike to Stun, Strike Mighty Blow.

Trappings

Hand Weapon, Leather Jerkin, Net, 4 Throwing Knives

Career Entries

Bodyguard, Merchant, Militiaman, Noble

Career Exits

Bodyguard, Marine, Mercenary, Militiaman, Outlaw, Seaman, Soldier.

Merchant Prince

Merchant Princes are the master merchants aboard a sea elfen trading ship. They are distinguished from the normal run of sea elfen Merchants by their opulent finery, their consummate skill when dealing, and their grand worldly manner.

This exclusive career often marks the end of clan naval service by the individual. It is the goal of the upwardly mobile of the sea elves, an example of the human-like ambition of the race. Many choose to become Explorers, revisiting some of the rare sights viewed during their naval days, but at a more leisurely pace.

Often a Merchant Prince becomes elected to the elevated position of Clan Elder. To outsiders, all sea elves seem to have the cultured air and finery of 'merchant princes'.



Merchant Prince Advance Scheme

WS +10, S +1, T +1, W +2,
I +10, Dx +10, Ld +40, Int +40
Cl +30, WP +30, Fel +30

Skills

Etiquette, Evaluate, Haggle, Magical Sense, Numismatics, Read/Write, Secret Language-Guilder, Speak Other Language, Super Numerate, Wit.

Trappings

Town House, Warehouse, 4000 Gold Crowns (for trading), D3 Scribes, D3 Merchants, Valuable Item (from far off continent such as Cathay - ideally a Ring or Chain, something visible, worn austentatiously, worth at least 1000GC).

Career Entries

Diver, Merchant, Sea Captain

Career Exits

Explorer, Gambler, Sea Captain

Marienburg

In many ocean ports a sea elf quarter will be expected, the sight of a sea elf common. The sea elf quarters of ports are old, beautiful and noble places. The population spread of sea elves amounts to groupings or clusters where clans have settled or maintain a trading post. Their largest communities are at Merrantalla in Lustria, Jer-Loren in Araby, Kao-Llermer in Nippon and the coastal cities of Lustria. The largest concentration of sea elves in the Old World can be found in Marienburg.

The Marienburg clan is called clan Tia-Farell. At the heart of the sea elfen quarter is their clan-ship, which no living human has ever seen. The ship is used for many things, it is the Elder's home, it is also a museum of the clan's origins and the only truly elfen artifact in Marienburg. It is also the store house of sea elf knowledge and lore.

The clan has its own section of the wharf, and a sizable slice of the city. The elfen quarter consists of three islands, the largest of which has the clan ship at its centre in a small lake. The quarter's buildings are ringed around the massive vessel to hide it from non-elfen eyes. The entire quarter is separated, either by the river or stone walls, from the rest of the city. Access is exclusively through gates guarded by elfen militia. The largest island of the three is strictly off limits to all but elves due to its holding the clan-ship.

Summary

Sea elves are generally an open minded and fair race, they have their arrogance, but that is part of being an elf. Their mixing with humans and other races has proven their flexibility and good intentions. Essentially they are the only race of elves who are prepared to look beyond what they have and what they are. To a large extent the future of the elfen race rests heavily on their shoulders, fortunately they are prepared to bear the burden.

*As the cool of our kin of the sea fails,
so do their singing voices slowly hush
Their culture mixes with that of man,
they live in his cities and are welcome.*

*A great ship drifts from its moorings,
towards troubled waters of a whirlpool.*

*It is the ship of the sea elves,
heading towards the vortex of man.*

Sea Elf Career Chart

Warrior	Career	Ranger	Career	Rogue	Career	Academic	Career
01 - 05	Bodyguard	01 - 20	Boatman	01 - 05	Agitator	01 - 10	Alchemist's Apprentice
06 - 20	Marine	21 - 30	Bounty Hunter	06 - 10	Bawd	11 - 15	Artisan's Apprentice
21 - 25	Mercenary	31 - 35	Coachman	11 - 25	Entertainer	16 - 30	Herbalist
26 - 35	Militiaman	36 - 45	Diver	26 - 30	Footpad	31 - 35	Hypnotist
36 - 45	Noble	46 - 65	Fisherman	31 - 40	Gambler	36 - 40	Initiate
46 - 50	Outlaw	66 - 70	Gamekeeper	41 - 50	Minstrel	41 - 45	Pharmacist
51 - 55	Protagonist	71 - 75	Herdsmen	51 - 60	Pedlar	46 - 50	Physician's Student
56 - 65	Seaman	76 - 85	Hunter	61 - 70	Raconteur	51 - 55	Scribe
66 - 70	Servant	86 - 95	Pilot	71 - 85	Smuggler	56 - 65	Seer
71 - 85	Soldier	96 - 00	Trapper	86 - 00	Thief	66 - 70	Student
86 - 90	Squire					71 - 85	Trader
91 - 95	Vigilante					86 - 00	Wizard's Apprentice
96 - 00	Watchman						



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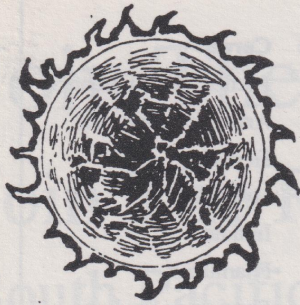
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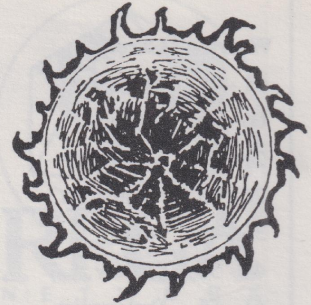
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The Monastery

A Dark Sun Setting

by Malcolm Adler



How To get There & Find It

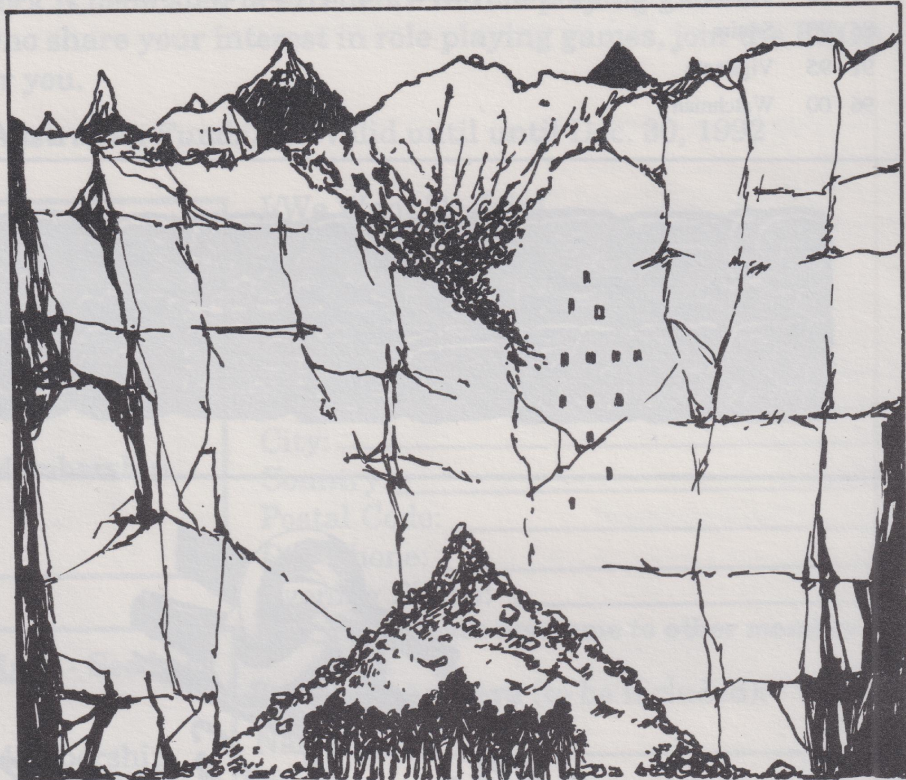
It is at the south western cliffs of the Dragons Bowl that a traveller may find a path down to the floor. Is it worth making such a trip? Of course, there is much water and food at the floor of the basin and it is rumoured many riches.

Here, at a place called Karaum by the human and elf raiding tribes, is a mountain trail. The path cuts down the cliff face in a steep and jagged path to the depth of one hundred yards, at which point it comes to a rubble strewn ledge (in fact the slide plane of a landslide). This steeply sloped and treacherous ledge sports a hand cut opening. Upon examination a staircase will be seen leading further down, running parallel to the cliff face. The staircase seems to be carved for 'human' size beings as the ceiling is eight feet from the floor.

This is the staircase of Karaum, a ruined entrance to a deserted monastery. This staircase zigzagged down from the original cliff top one hundred yards above, but since the landslide over four centuries ago has been reachable only by the cliff face path (four Dex checks are needed to traverse the path safely, one if precautions are taken, eg. climbing ropes etc).

The Staircase

The staircase which is wide enough for only single file travel, descends a further fifty yards. It appears that the path is deserted and not often used, it eventually leads down to a small ledge above an old ruined monastery which clings to the cliff face below. A path winds down the cliff a further ten yards to the monastery buildings which are carved into the cliff wall.



The Monastery

Originally a network of caves, it was carved out by monks of a long forgotten faith well over a millennia ago and inhabited by them for at least seven centuries. Then, as the waters receded even further and the well ran dry, it was abandoned. Hrace, a young but ambitious Defiler, heard about the ruin in his travels and settled here over forty years ago, making the place his own. He has added to the grove of 'Trees of Life' planted by the monks (which are growing at the cliff's base) and husbanded them to the healthy state they appear to be in today.

The layout of the monastery itself is very simple, it is a series of two lines of caves that each have had holes carved through the cliff wall so as to have windows, or walls built up on ledges to

seal them from the elements. The place is windy, dirty and uncomfortable, ideal for the monks who sought such a place.

The Occupants - The College

There are eight mages in the ruined monastery. Their leader is Hrace, a 14th level Defiler, AC -1, HP 85, who is very capable with magic. Hrace has access to all spells for levels 1 - 4 and a smattering of higher level spells (your choice). He, along with his four apprentices, AC 8, HP 9 (young nobles who pay for their tuition by having their servants/slaves spend their days fetching food from the oases to the east) who can use all 1st level spells, make up the 'College of Karaum'. Hrace has several other Defiler colleagues, 5th level, AC 4, HP 25, can use all 1 - 3 level spells, who frequent the monastery.

Map

The drawing provided shows what Karaum looks like. Due to limits on space I can only give the basics of detail, please feel free to decorate, change and furnish the area.

The Fractures

The 'fractures' are various fissures and slide planes throughout the cliffs, some of them will effect the decrepit monastery by causing uneven floors, chicaned passages and damage to stairs. Request statistic checks whenever you feel necessary.

The Exit

A staircase down through the rock of the cliffs exits near the ground level of the basin. It is hidden and can only be spotted from the Grove which it leads into if someone is specifically looking for it, or a PC is using a tracking proficiency to follow someone who recently travelled the path. Inside the exit is a storeroom. Here the collegians keep the tools they tend the trees with.

The Grove

A large grove of 'Trees of Life' (refer *Dark Sun*™) huddle at the cliffs feet, growing even amongst the mounds of fallen rock. These magical trees have been tended by Hrace the Defiler so he can draw upon them as a source for his magic. The trees are not growing near any visible water source, which may hint at them being strange. If PCs should be wandering through the grove they may notice that there is no wildlife here as the Defilers draw too frequently on the life force of the area for fauna to establish itself comfortably.

Several miles east of the Grove are six small but rich oases, these are frequented by human tribes who have learned to steer clear of the the Grove, its people and the surrounding cliffs.

Things to Remember

It is important to remember that every time a Defiler casts in this area the Grove will be drained of life force, the trees will seem to wither, some will apparently die - crumbling to dust. The

entire area around Karaum is devoid of any other flora as the apprentice mages practice their art and defile the landscape of life essence.

How to Use Karaum

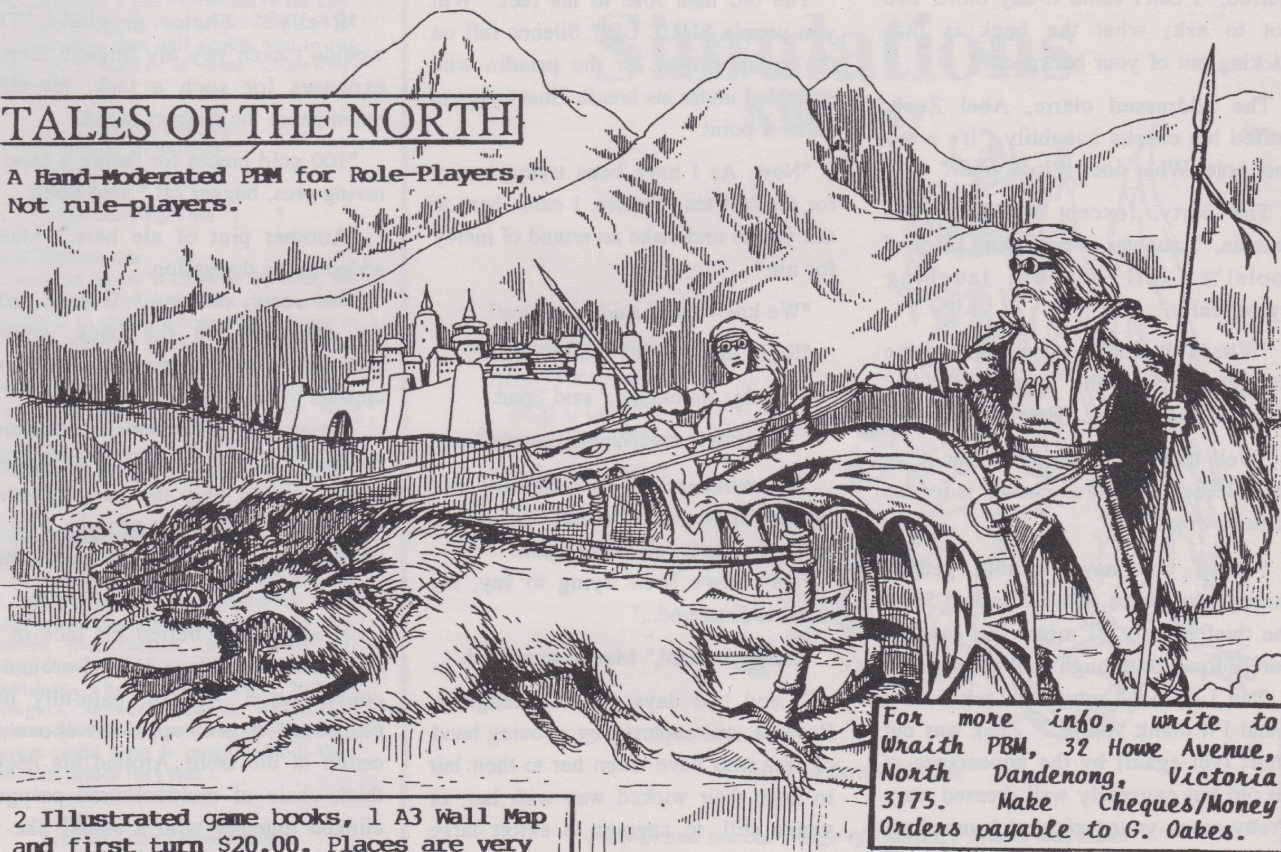
The main use for Karaum is as an interesting filler for your *AD&D*, *Dark Sun* campaign, although the setting is easily transferred to other games. There are several ways to work the 'College' into a session, the PC's could be hired by a worried noble trying to locate one of his wayward sons, or else they might be induced by the local tribesmen to 'deal with the Defilers'.

Alternatively, one of the PC's may want to join the College, or is already a member and returning to his former tutor for aid or new knowledge. Another possibility is that of a secret enclave of Defilers networked around Athas of which Karaum is but one small chapter.

Finally, you could simply lure the party into the Dragon's Bowl with tales of ruined cities and vast riches and they stumble across Karaum on their way.

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Part the Second - Spot the Plot Device by Andrew Daniels

Wherein our bungling heroes have a few ales and find out what ails...

The Inn buzzed. In fact it positively vibrated with the life of the newly formed. Not unexpectedly, the archetypical fat innkeeper entertained his guests with his as yet limitless supply of 'bon homme' type barman tales. Typically luscious little barwenches with cleavages out of *Boys Own Fantasies* scampered with foaming pots of ale between tables full of happy smiling customers. A typically merry time was being had by all. Funny that!

At the typical corner table, our party of adventurers sat happily quaffing fine ales and other assorted alcoholic beverages paid for with the coinage of the inevitably fat cleric's typically fat purse. The Paladin excepted, of course; Virgil sat moodily supping a large orangeade mumbling something about, "One's body is a temple, you know."

"Look," Wilson, the thin mage, slurred, "I can't stand it any more, I've got to ask; what the heck is that sticking out of your backpack?"

The addressed cleric, Abel Zeek, puffed his cheeks haughtily. "It's a ten foot pole. What does it look like?"

The party, (except for Virgil the Paladin, "Laughter is the hiding place of fools!") fell about laughing hysterically.

"What's it for?" asked Shana the Ranger, wiping the tears from her almond shaped eyes, "Baton twirling!"

"Well there must be a use for it, or else He wouldn't have chosen it for me to carry would He!"

"Don't you have trouble getting through doorways with it?" asked Spud the thief merrily, "I mean you can just barely squeeze through as it is, mate."

"No I do not," returned Zeek coldly, "And I'll thank you to..." Zeek was cut short (yet again) by the appearance of an old but extremely well dressed man. Pretty much your typical rich merchant type plot device.

"Look out, lads" said Mango the Magnificent, fighter, "we're on."

"Gentlemen..." the old man began.

"And lady," interjected Virgil.

"Erm, yes quite. As I was saying, gentlemen and lady, I..."

"Here, old man, take the weight off," interrupted Mango.

"Er, thank you," said the man, seating himself. "My name is..."

"Here, buy the old geezer a drink," Spud interjected.

"Thank you but I would prefer..."

"What!" said Zeek, "looks like he's got all the money, let him buy."

"Yes, I'll gladly buy you all a drink if you would just let me fin..."

"How rude," says Virgil, "he's our guest, we should..."

The old man rose to his feet. "Will you people SHUT UP!" Silence fell on the group except for the paladin who mumbled under his breath "Just trying to make a point."

"Now. As I have been trying to say for the last ten minutes, I came here to ask you to undertake an errand of mercy for me."

"We knew that," said Mango.

"Right up our alley," said Virgil.

"Touchy old bugger," said Spud.

"Your buy!" said Wilson hopefully.

The merchant sighed resignedly and ordered a round of drinks. Drinks in hand, the party fell silent again.

"As I have been trying to say, my name is Ergmund..."

"Lucky bastard," Mango grumbled.

"...and two days ago my daughter, Rowena, was captured by a roving band of orcs who have taken her to their lair to have their wicked way with her, or worse still, to attempt to extort large amounts of cash off me."

"Yeah, good, heard that one before. Two more pints here, ta love."

"And I would like you mighty adventurers to return her safely..."

"Yeah, love to, but we're a bit busy right now, see," explained Wilson.

"Seem to have missed an important piece of the business here," butted in Shana, "the question of price..."

Virgil rose to make a speech, puffing out his chest. "Come now, my worthy fellows, and lady, we cannot reduce this man's sad plight to such tawdry levels of pecuniary interest."

"Too bloody right we can. How much?" Spud chipped in.

"I can offer 100 geepees each," replied Ergmund, his face turning red as the group burst out laughing. "Times are hard, business is not what it used to be, you are my last hope..."

"Really?" Shana giggled, "That wouldn't even pay my lingerie laundry expenses for such a task, let alone recompense the dangers faced."

"100 gold pieces for facing a band of raving orcs, bugger off," said Spud.

"Another pint of ale here," Mango added to the discussion.

"I'm sorry, old son," Wilson patted the merchant on the back, smiling broadly, "but the general consensus appears to be a big NO."

The air chilled. Sounds of merriment receded and The Inn faded slowly into darkness until only the party remained bathed in a cold circle of light. And the atmosphere took on a distinctly chilly edge.

"Oops." Zeek buried his face in his tankard as the others looked around in consternation. A frail, painfully thin, bespectacled gent appeared above the centre of the table. Around his neck a thick chain of multicoloured polygons clinked together with a sound like the rapped knucklebones of the about to be

dead. Cold myopic eyes froze the group.

The voice of one who knows exactly how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, *and* how to deal with the silly prancing buggers spoke out. A voice of ice, honed to razor sharpness by years of splitting hairs; hairs still attached to heads, mostly.

"It would appear there is some reluctance to follow the plot in this Group."

"Er, not really," attempted Wilson.

"SILENCE!" Wilson bit his lip and wondered about his next half dozen saving throws.

"You all know who I am?"

"Well no, not really," answered Virgil hopefully. Shana elbowed the paladin's ribs.

"He's new," Mango explained.

"I am the Keeper of the Manuals!"



Thunder crashed. Lightning flickered flashing off the rims of the Keeper's spectacles, and other hackneyed effects played ominously in the background.

"I am the Lawgiver and you will OBEY my commands to the letter."

"But I can't read," Mango complained.

"Whose round is it?" asked Wilson.

The Keeper sighed heavily. "For your benefit, puny and insignificant ones, I will again explain the first and most important Unwritten Rule of Adventuring. When I introduce a plot device leading to an adventure what do you do?"

"We take it!" chorused the group.

"Good. That's much better." The figure faded as the sights and sounds of the inn melted back into view.

"Ere, that deal of yours, Ergmund, start tomorrow early enough?"



Paper Tiger Games Presents **Gang City** by Peter Mackay

Friday May 27th 1996 - 7:00 pm. The Bourke St Mall was packed with shoppers as Johnny's small patrol elbowed their way toward Swanston St. Four green recruits, two regulars, Johnny and Mojo, his second in command. Not much, really, if there were trouble.

Up ahead a scuffle erupted out of Bevilles as a group of emaciated-looking youths wearing black singlets and white bandannas burst from the store. As they took off across the mall shouts of *Stop! Thief!* rang out into the night air.

"Shit!!" said Johnny, "Skulls!!"

"And on our turn!" rejoined Mojo.

Johnny whipped the switchblade from the pocket of his leather jacket and snapped it open.

"O.K. boys," he said, "let's waste 'em."

Gang City is a play-by-mail game of street gang rivalry in near-future Australian cities. The game postulates a breakdown of law and order and the onset of urban chaos. Youth gangs roam the cities, fighting and dying over possession of "turf". Decent citizens are afraid to walk the streets at night and strong men band together for protection. What little law enforcement remains is provided by small groups of ex-soldiers and policemen who band together to form their own "law gangs" in an attempt to make the streets safe.

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Dice Are Dead

*Play-By-Mail, Live Role
Playing & Interactive
Gaming Column*
compiled by Glenn Oakes

Australian Realms is pleased to introduce to you our latest addition, a regular column in which Glenn takes us on a voyage of discovery into 'interactive' gaming and associated areas to explore some of the lesser known sea lanes of our great hobby.

Play-By-Mail

Shadow Lords II

Post-It-Games have just recently announced that they have updated their very popular fantasy conquest game "Shadow Lords". *Shadow Lords II* includes most of the features of the old game that play-by-mailers are familiar with, and adds a host of exciting new options. Leaders will now be able to search for magical items, gold and power. However, these treasures are well protected by powerful guardians that are no pushover - be warned. Numen (players control these god-like entities) will have the opportunity to send their champions to tournaments to duel for fame and gold. The order format has been simplified somewhat, this adds considerably to the enjoyment as you can spend more time plotting to overthrow your neighbours! There are a whole host of other new features which I leave to players to discover in game. If controlling a god and waging all out war with your rivals is your cup of tea, drop Post-It-Games a line.



Adventurer Kings

Roma Games hold the Australian licence to the excellent *Adventurer Kings*. Described in *Flagship Magazine* as 'a challenging fantasy war game that doesn't cost the earth' this PBM game is 100% computer moderated - hard to believe when you look at the detailed battle reports. These are very informative and often amusing without resorting to masses of confusing figures, formulae and charts. Each player gets to assume the role of a King (or Queen) of a wealthy province. Not satisfied with this, your potential despot must look to conquer the neutral provinces surrounding the home province as fast as possible. After a couple of turns you will inevitably come to the border of another player - this is where the fun really starts. Will you go to war, or will you form an alliance and turn your greedy eyes to other lands? Each game of *Adventurer Kings* has 10 players, although a variant game, *Super AK*, can cater for up to 25. If you want to play an excellent, medium complexity PBM, you should check out *Roma Games' Adventurer Kings*!

Spiral Arm II

Spiral Arm is a classic computer moderated science fiction game of empire building and fleet combat. The game is played on a map containing around 650 stars. It is reminiscent of the Australian designed computer game - *Reach for the Stars* - with the major difference being that your opponents are all human and truly devious - all 50 of them! Each would-be galactic emperor begins the game with a single star and a small number of ships with which they compete to attain the victory conditions of the game. Capturing new worlds, boosting production and tech levels and choosing combat formations is all in a days work for a *Spiral Arm* fleet admiral. And the unique alliance system creates an intense level of interaction between players. To get started in this fun game contact the moderator, Barry, of *Sandgroper PBM*.

Live Role Playing

Exciting LRP news just to hand concerns the launch of new national role playing convention to take place over the Australia Day weekend in January of 1993. The inaugural event will be staged at an extensive site in the Otway Ranges in Victoria. The as yet to be named convention will be predominately LRP orientated, but with a number of other facets of gaming represented. The convention is going to be a perfect introduction for beginners to LRP and at around \$30.00 to \$40.00 for three days entertainment represents great value for money.

The *Shadow League LRP Association*, the main organisers of the event, promises a few surprises. As well as 'traditional' fantasy scenarios and arena combat they'll be introducing Science Fiction LRP. Using specially imported lasers and sensors for registering hits, these innovative games will avoid the stereotypical scenario of run, shoot and kill by including a heavy role playing component. Some of the ideas being tossed around are Space Marine squads on bug hunts ("Gimme da 'eavy plasma!"), scientific expeditions surveying hostile planets, and a number of other plot lines inspired by popular sf films. To keep the combat freaks happy mass battles will also be arranged. To find out more about this mega-event, or LRP in general, contact The Shadow League

Well folks, that's about all for this issue. If you have a submission for the column, please send it to:

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Roma Games PO Box 1957 Toowoomba
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Sandgroper PBM 1484 Midland 6056
The Shadow League 32 Howe Ave North
Dandenong 3175



PSYKERS II!

By Colin Taber & Michael Thane



Psykers II is the follow up to an article that appeared in issue #5. Colin & Michael show us how to expand the talents available to psionicists in Warhammer 40,000.

Feeling short of choices for psychic attacks in *Warhammer 40K*? Here we present some suggestions for converting spells from the *Warhammer Fantasy Game* for use in the 41st Millenium. Psionics and magic in the Warhammer mythos are the same thing. The only difference being that the fantasy setting (Old World) mixes the real world with that of the warp. The warp intrudes into the fantasy setting at the poles of the planet and because of this, magic/psionic energy is easy to use. This is why anyone with a reasonable Intelligence can be a wizard. In any other world in the Warhammer universe, that is, all those worlds of the Imperium and beyond, a psyker has to be born to the task. He is an individual with a special ability to tap into the warp, a fated or marked person outside of the norm. This is the reason why a psyker does not need the help of material components when utilising psychic energy, as he is personally and directly linked to the warp.

For a psyker to use a 'spell' from WFRP or WFB they need not do anything special. Checking spell listings, you'll find each spell written up in the same way as a psionic ability in WH40K. What we are suggesting is that you take advantage of the spells listed in all three books to pull them across to the game you are currently playing (you could also take a psionic attack and translate it to a Wizard spell in WFRP or WFB).

Making It Work

After a quick perusal of the WH40K rule book pp 50-52, WFRP pp 153-181, and WFB pp 153-182 you'll notice that by substituting Magic Points for Psychic Points you can pretty much mesh the lists together. The only discernible difference is that the fantasy 'spells' give more information.

Before starting any battle or campaign, it needs to be cleared with the other players whether this 'borrowing' is going to be allowed. To avoid cries of "cheat" and "how in Nurgle's name did you do that?" we recommend all players are equally familiar with the effects of spells before they are allowed in WH40K as psionic powers.

The most important thing to note about the WFRP spells is that fear inducing spells should affect the whole squad as per a 'rout', and the squad is allowed to 'rally' when the rallying phase comes around.

The Branches of Magic

WFRP and WFB have spells in certain categories that might be considered too disturbing for an Imperial psyker to use; we're particularly thinking about Necromancy and Demonology here. What we might do is have a quick look at each branch of magic and suggest some workable limitations on their use.

Petty Magic

Any psyker may have access to these abilities. They are treated as level one psionic attacks and therefore will be quite expensive considering what they achieve. In most cases you will be struggling to find a practical combat use.

Battle Magic

Available to all psykers as straight conversions with no amendments.

Demonologist Magic

These spells may not be used by Imperial forces or other supposedly 'good' forces. While they may be strong spells, a psyker cannot justify calling forth a daemon given the Imperium's policy is ignorance. In any case, such a manifestation would certainly cause panic in nearby Imperial troops who would not understand what is happening. Best used by Renegade troops and Orks who follow a chaos god (normal Orks wouldn't touch it).

Elementalist Magic

This can be open to any psyker without limitations.

Illusionist Magic

Can be used by any psyker, but most of these spells are very restricted with their effectiveness when used in battle. No limitations apply.

Necromantic Magic

These spells can be cast by any psyker. The spells can animate or summon as directed by the fantasy books. These spells will not affect any fallen Eldar as necromantic summonings cannot recall a spirit captured in waystone (all Eldar carry waystones to capture their souls when they die). Any troops within ten inches of the animated or summoned entities should make a rout test.

Druidic Magic

These spells have no restrictions placed on them either, but like the Illusionist spells, they are not overly useful in a normal WH40K combat environment. The challenge is for players to devise battlegrounds where this is not so!

So there you have it, many new ways for psykers to cause havoc on the battlefields of the 41st Millenium. Have fun with them... oh, and remember what happened to Skweely!



He Who Fires First...

Battletech Rules Variants from Mechwarrior Brewer



These Battletech rules changes are not official FASA rules changes. They are presented as an option, and you are free to adopt or ignore them as you wish. These changes are modified from several official FASA sources, including MECHWARRIOR™, and SOLARIS VII™.

Credit for the development of these rules variants must also go to Gary Danaford, Wesley Brooks, and all the other Members of the 341st Assault Cluster.

INITIATIVE SEQUENCE

Roll initiative for each individual vehicle, infantry unit, or 'Mech on the board, modifying for pilot skill, etc. as per normal Battletech or Mechwarrior rules.

1) Movement

The lowest initiative 'Mechs and units move first. (Roll off between 'Mechs that have the same initiative). Movement order passes up through the initiative order from the lowest to the highest until all 'Mechs and other units are moved.

2) Declare Fire

Lowest initiative units determine line-of-sight, torso-twist, designate targets, and declare fire. Do not roll off again between units that have the same initiative: use the same sequence determined for Movement. Fire declaration moves up through the initiative order from the lowest to the highest until all units have declared fire. So far this is more or less conventional, it is in the area of Combat Resolution where the rule variants occur.

3) Combat Resolution

The unit with the highest initiative resolves the fire it declared earlier *and immediately applies the damage and critical effects to its target*. In this manner, 'Mechs and other units further down the initiative order can have critical components damaged, and even destroyed, before getting a chance to return fire. Keep resolving fire and applying critical damage down the initiative order from highest to lowest until all units have fired.

This non-simultaneous combat phasing makes the game faster, and infinitely more deadly: a kind of 'suicide' Battletech. It is a little less fair to inexperienced mechwarriors than the conventional simultaneous combat resolution (when critical damage was only applied after all units had fired), but it captures the flavour of the faster and deadlier combat of the FASA Battletech novels. It would be perfect for 'sudden death' competition Battletech, and large-scale convention games.

Example

Three 'Mechs (a Mad Dog, a Dragonfly, and a Timber Wolf) roll for initiative. The Dragonfly rolls 11, the Mad Dog rolls 15 and the Timberwolf rolls 17. They move in order of lowest (11) to highest (17), and declare fire in

the same order.

The Timberwolf (with the highest initiative:17) then resolves its fire first. It attacks the Mad Dog, damaging a weapon and scoring a critical hit on an arm actuator. The Mad Dog (next on the initiative order list) then resolves its attack. Under the normal rules, the arm actuator and weapon damage would not affect this 'Mech's fire until next turn. Using the new combat rules, the damage takes effect immediately. The Mad Dog must use the fire modifier for the arm actuator damage this turn, and it cannot use the damaged weapon.

NB: Had the Mad Dog been destroyed, the Dragonfly (which was further down the initiative list) would still have to fire (and build up heat) if it had declared fire vs. the Mad Dog. Declared fire cannot be cancelled.

* * *

TARGETING COMPUTERS

The rules for Targeting Computers as they are written in the Battletech Compendium seem too deadly. 'Mechs with a TC have an enormous advantage over those that do not, for a very little tonnage penalty. We have changed that a little. In this variant, a player may use his targeting computer to do either one of the following:

1) -1 To Hit

The attacker may still choose to just receive the -1 modifier to hit for all

weapons under TC control, as described in the Battletech Compendium. All damage locations are rolled randomly for each weapon.

2) Group Damage

Group all targeting-computer controlled weapons fire onto a single randomly rolled location. All damage done by the weapons controlled by the TC is applied to the randomly rolled location in any order the firing player desires. Roll once on the normal Battletech hit location chart to determine the hit location. Using this option attracts the +3 to hit modifier for using a targeting computer.

3) Bias Hit Locations

The attacker may choose to bias the TC weapons hit locations by specifying either an "Up", "Down", "Left", or "Right" bias in an attack. Each weapon controlled by the TC that hits the target must roll for location separately, but the hit location table used is determined by the bias. TCs biased "Up" use the Punch hit location table, "Down" rolls on the Kick location table, "Left" and "Right" roll on the respective columns in the normal Battletech hit location table.

NB: Attackers in the Target's left arc cannot target "Right" and vice versa. "Down" cannot be specified against 'Mech targets in partial cover. Using this option also attracts the +3 modifier for the targeting computer. As mentioned above, if the attacker chooses to either Group damage, or Bias his locations, there is a +3 modifier to hit. The attacker can

specify both Group damage and Bias hit location, but that is an additional +4, making the total modifier +7 for the targeting computer.

Rolling to Hit with TCs

Rather than rolling 2D6 to hit for each individual weapon controlled by the TC, roll 2D6 once, and the result applies to all weapons under TC control. Weapons that miss have no effect on the target.

Example

An attacker is using his TC to attack a Target. His Medium Pulse lasers need 4's to hit, and his ER PPC needs 6's. He rolls 2D6 once, rolling "5". This means that the pulses hit, but the ER PPC misses.

* * *

I trust these variants will prove useful in your Battletech games. *Australian Realms* welcomes input from its readers. If you have any comments regards these suggested rules changes, or perhaps some ideas of your own that you'd like to discuss, write them down and post them to:

Mechwarrior Brewer
cl-Australian Realms
PO Box 220
Morley WA 6062

Next issue, Mechwarrior Brewer will bring you some custom designed 'Mechs that performed well in a recent tournament event. Until then, remember, 'He who fires first, fires longest...!'

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News

Necronomicon

This year's Necronomicon in Sydney will feature American game designer **Greg Stafford** as Guest of Honour. Greg, the president of *Chaosium* and designer of such role playing classics as *Runequest* and *Pendragon*, is looking forward to experiencing some of Australia's unique gaming styles. *Australian Realms* will be talking to Greg when he arrives in Australia, so look out for the interview in issue 8. For a chance to meet Greg in the flesh, or get into the many other events happening at *Necronomicon* contact one of the convention organisers:

John Hughes (06) 2477598

Mark Morrison (03) 8986203

Michael Hitchens (02) 6832229

Isle of Crowns

Issue 6's PBM Special Offer was such a success that the GM, Peter Read has kindly agreed to repeat the offer this issue. Currently there are several *Realms* staffers competing in the game, so if you want to bash someone infamous, read the yellow insert, send away to *Dynamic Games* and join in the fun.

Warhammer 40K Role Play

Are you tired of waiting for *Game's Workshop* to do the right thing and print up a set of role play rules for the 41st Millennium? If you are, *Australian Realms* has solved your problem, next issue we will feature an article detailing how to get the role play into the battlefield.

The Top Ten

More interesting results in our survey of the gaming shops this issue.

Dragonlance Product Line - TSR

Cyberpunk RPG - R.Talsorian Games
AD&D 2nd Ed Player's Handbook - TSR

Dangerous Journeys - Mythus - GDW

Dark Queen of Krynn - SSI

Inquisition Miniatures Fantasy Line

Heroquest - Milton Bradley

Dream Park RPG - R.Talsorian Games

Against the Ogre Horde - Penguin

Shadowrun RPG - FASA

The retailers tell us that a spate of tax refund cheques hitting the streets has seen sales figures improve this month. Here's to a continued economic recovery!

The A-Team

To be perfectly honest, even the author was surprised at the popularity of this little ditty. *The Adventures of the A-Team* had the majority of the mail from issue 6 so we promise to keep it going as long as you continue to like it. Andrew, however, would like to stress that all episodes in the story are performed by specially trained stunt gamers under controlled test conditions. Under no circumstances should you try to emulate the antics of the A-Team in your game!

Extra Pages

Always looking to provide Australian gamers with value for money, *Realms* has expanded in size by 4 pages this issue. As you continue to support us and our advertisers the format of the magazine can only improve in format quality and size. And don't keep us a secret, let all your friends know about us. Before you know it we'll be moving in on Rupert's turf...
... no, not the bear in the sweater!

New Products

As many of you are already aware judging by the Top Ten selling games, the EGG is back. *GDW* have released *E.Gary Gygar's* new role playing game, *Dangerous Journeys* - Mythus and the companion book, *Magick* this month. A magazine, computer games, miniatures and at least three novels are rattling the cage as we speak. *Mythus* is 413 pages (great value at \$39.95 rrp) of fantasy role play system rules, ominously marked 'I' on the soft spine. Inside, the campaign world of *Aerth* waits in all its idiosyncratic nomenclature glory. Wae waeit with baeted breath to saee if the gaeme is as good as it glossy hype.

FASA Corp's second edition of *Shadowrun* is due out on the shelves now. Promising to update and simplify the skills rules and improve the overall graphic quality of the work, it will be interesting to see how it fares against the Australian reprint of *R.Talsorian's* game in the same genre, *Cyberpunk*.

R. Talsorian have their own new rpg release this month, *Dream Park*. *Australian Realms* will be following up its coverage of this growing phenomenon (see the *Niven & Barnes* interview page 11) with an article from one of *Dream Park Corp's* theme park designers, **Doug King**, in issue 8.

TSR's upcoming releases include another Troy Denning *Dark Sun* novel, *The Amber Enchantress*; *Golden Voyages* a source box of goodies for *Al Qadim*; a *Forgotten Realms* boxed set detailing the drow's underground city of *Menzoberranzan*; *The Complete Spacefarer's Handbook* for *Spelljammer*; and a really nasty looking piece of work from the classic *World of Greyhawk*, *From the Ashes..* Wisconsin is looking smaller all the time!

Next Issue

Greg Stafford Interview

The Forest - A Scenario

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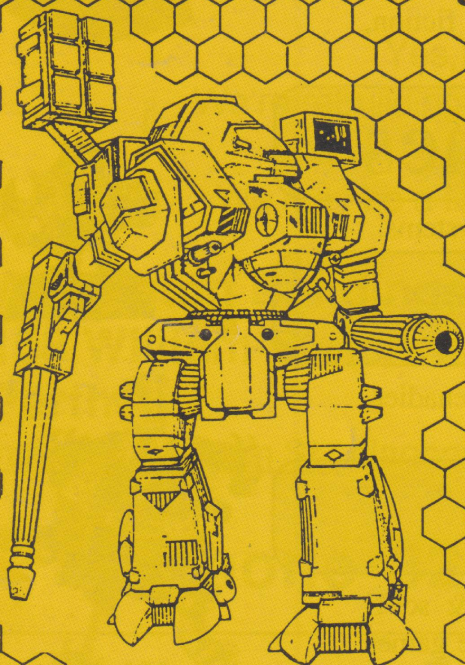
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